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OR, THE

Myſtery of the Goſpel

IN THE

Salvation of a Sinner,

Opened and Explained ;

Wherein the Nature of the Goſpel-Salvation is ſtated, the Poſſibility of the Sinner's being ſaved is evinced, the Terms of the Goſpel-Covenant are aſcertained and cleared, the Importance of Salvation is illuſtrated, and the great Concern of every Soul is excited and enforced :

In ſeveral DISCOURSES on *Acts* XVI. 30.

By JOHN BARNARD, A. M.

Paſtor of the Firſt Church in *Marblehead.*

— *GOD our SAVIOUR, who will have all Men to be ſaved, and to come unto the Knowledge of the Truth.*
1. Tim. ii. 3, 4.

BOSTON, NEW-ENGLAND,

Printed and Sold by ROGERS and FOWLE in Queen-ſtreet, and D. GOOKIN near the South-Meeting. 1750.

To the Flock of the LORD JESUS, in *Marblehead*, under my more ſpecial Care.

Dearly Beloved,

MY Heart's Deſire, and Prayer, for you, and your Children, is, that you all may be ſaved. Therefore I have laboured among you, with but little Interruption, (thro' the Goodneſs of GOD,) for more than *Thirty-four* Years, warning every Man, and teaching every Man, that I might preſent every Man perfect in CHRIST JESUS. Though there have been many Imperfections attending my Miniſtry among you, and I have great Reaſon to cry out, my Leanneſs! my Leanneſs! and earneſtly to aſk it of you to join with me in fervent Supplications to the GOD of all Grace, to pardon, and accept, my Perſon, and poor Services; nevertheleſs, I can truly ſay, that I have longed after you all, and have not ſhunned to declare unto you the whole Counſel of GOD, nor counted my Life dear unto me, ſo that I might fulfil the Miniſtry, which I have received of the LORD JESUS, being willing to ſpend, and be ſpent, in your Service.

My Obligations, eſpecially to many of you, for the unwearied Kindneſſes which you have ſhown to me, are very great; which I thus openly acknow-

ledge

ledge, with Thankſgiving unto GOD, on your Behalf, and my earneſt Prayers that all may be rewarded into your own Boſoms, and upon your Poſterity.

Writing has been no little Burden to me, in my declining Years; yet I have been willing to comply with your Deſires, and the Deſire of many others, in tranſcribing theſe Sermons for the Preſs; and I do it the rather, that I may leave with you, when I am dead and gone, the Sum of that *Goſpel* which I have been preaching to you from the Beginning. CHRIST, and SALVATION by him, is the Marrow of the Goſpel. CHRIST the LORD, as well as SAVIOUR; Salvation from *Sin*, as well as *Wrath*, I have ever inculcated upon you, as abſolutely neceſſary, that you might not deceive yourſelves with a falſe Faith, and a vain Hope.

And, Oh! that there were a ſerious, and thorow Concern of Soul, what you ſhall do to be ſaved, more generally awakened in you; that the Sincerity of your Faith, and Repentance, might be evident by the Purity of your Lives, in Conformity to the holy Example, and excellent Laws of JESUS CHRIST; that your Faith, and Love, and Obedience, may go abroad unto all Men, and we may glory in you, in the Churches of our GOD, that your Faith groweth exceedingly, and your Charity towards each other, and to all Men, aboundeth; that the Town may be as Remarkable for the

Sanctity

Sanctity of it's Manners, and the amiable Vertues of the Christian Life, as in former Years, it has been notorious for the contrary.

I know, *my Brethren*, that, as for many of you who attend the Businesses of the Sea, your Temptations are very many ; nevertheless, as I bless GOD for the great Reformation of Manners, evident unto all Men, and the flourishing Condition of the Town, the happy Fruits of it, so I entreat you to prosecute the more thorow perfecting of that good Work, and that you would, each of you for yourselves, be careful to be furnished with that inward Principle, which alone will truly fortify you against Temptations, and support, and strengthen your Vertue. To this End suffer me earnestly to recommend two Things to the diligent Practice of every one of you ; I mean

First, The Religion of the Closet, that you make Conscience of it, every Day, Morning, and Evening, to retire alone, and pour out your fervent Prayers to the GOD of all Grace, to convert, and save you ; let no Day pass without your Visits to GOD, your best Friend, for his gracious Help.

The other Thing is the Religious Sanctification of the LORD's Day ; let no Part of that holy Day be spent in unnecessary Labours, much less in Sports, and Diversions ; but employ the whole of it in religious Exercises, either publick, or private ; ever remember that the Religion, and Comfort, of

the enſuing Week, will very much depend upon your ſtrict Obſervation of that holy Day; *it ſhall be a Sign between me and you, that I am the* LORD *that doth ſanctify you.* Exod. xxx. 15.

May theſe Sermons, for the printing of which you have ſo generally, and chearfully, been at a great Part of the Charge, not only abide in your Houſes, but be often, and ſeriouſly, read over by you, and your's, and by the Bleſſing of GOD, be treaſured up in your Hearts, and have a due Influence upon your Lives, that you may believe, and practice, ſo as to approve yourſelves the true Diſciples, and Followers of the bleſſed JESUS.

GOD grant you may be a pure, and holy Church, eſtabliſhed, and built up in the Words of Faith, and good Doctrine, that you, and your Children after you, may continue to walk in the Truth, being knit together in one Body, in Chriſt, with that Charity which is the Bond of Perfectneſs here, and the Glory and Happineſs of the upper World. And when you ſhall have Occaſion to invite an other to miniſter unto you in holy Things, in my Stead, I beſeech you, let there be an hearty Unanimity, and condeſcending Goodneſs, upheld in that difficult Affair; and earneſtly beg it of GOD, and uſe your beſt Endeavours, that you may be furniſhed with one of the beſt Gifts, well ſtudied in the Doctrine of Salvation by JESUS CHRIST, and who will naturally care for your State: and may he, through

the

the Bleſſing of the Moſt High, do more, and greater, Services for you, than I have done.

Thro' the ſparing Mercy of God to me, I have lived to bury by much the greateſt Part of the Church, and Congregation, I firſt received the Charge of, (I think there are but three Males of the Church now living,) you have riſen up, and your Children are riſing, in the Room of your Fathers, and their Grandfathers. Oh! may I be ſerviceable to your Faith, and an Helper of your Joy! *Brethren*; Pray for me, that your aged Paſtor, whom you cannot expect to continue long with you, may not be left to a fruitleſs old Age, but that he may continue to bring forth Fruit, as long as it ſhall pleaſe GOD to ſpare him to you; Fruit that ſhall abound unto your Account, and unto his own; that when he ſhall reſt from his Labours, he may be found faithful, and his Works may follow him, in the gracious Rewards of them: and may you, who are his Hope now, be his Joy, and Crown of Rejoicing hereafter; that both he that ſoweth, and you who reap, may rejoice together, in the Preſence of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, at his appearing. To whoſe Bleſſed Spirit, and Grace, I commend you all.

Your unworthy Paſtor,

Marblehead, Jan. 1, 1749, | 50.

John Barnard.

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The Nature of the Gospel-Salvation.

SERMON I.

ACTS XVI. 30.

And said, Sirs, What must I do to be saved?

IT is one of the Aphorisms of *Solomon*, Prov. xxii. 3. *A prudent Man foreseeth the Evil, and hideth himself; but the Simple pass on, and are punished.* How natural is it for us, when we are under the Apprehension of any threatening Danger, to use our utmost Prudence and Diligence, that, if possible, we may happily prevent its falling upon us. And he must be very simple, and stupid, indeed, whose Fears are not sufficiently awakened, by the real Prospect of approaching Evil, (especially if the Evil be great) to put him upon improving his best Foresight, and active Caution, by the most probable, and likely, Means, to defend himself from the impending Mischief, which he may possibly, and lawfully, with due Application, avoid the Force of. Though every one, 'tis true, does not equally foresee the Danger that threatens him, whilst it is yet at a Distance from him, and so, for Want of a greater Sagacity, the Evil, which might have been prevented, oftentimes, surprizes many an one, at unawares, and falls heavy upon them, when they least expected it; yet, who is there, in the Exercise of

his Reaſon, that ſeeth and knoweth, himſelf to be in imminent Danger, that will tamely wait till the impending Miſchief hath ſeized upon him, and then exert himſelf, in the Improvement of his Knowledge, and Power, to get rid of it, as well as he can; and will not rather timely beſtir himſelf, and think what Methods he ſhall take to divert the Stroke, and would not do all that lay in his Power, to ward off the coming Blow? That, at leaſt, he might lighten the Evil, and render it leſs hurtful to him, if he could not wholly avoid the utmoſt Force of it. This is the conſtant Practice of every wiſe Man, who has his Thoughts about him, in his Regards to his Body, and his temporal Intereſts.

Thus, when the Arrows of Death are flying, thick, and unſeen, among us,* how common is it for us to hear, thoſe who are expoſed to the Danger, cry out, with a great deal of Earneſtneſs and Concern of Mind, *Where ſhall we go? What ſhall we do?* that we may be ſafe.

But is it not ſtrange! to ſee Perſons ſo very much in an Agony, for the Safety of their Bodies, mighty inquiſitive, what Methods they ſhall take, to ſave themſelves from the Evil they fear; and being willing to do any Thing, that lies in their Power, to eſcape the Death that threatens them; and, at the ſame Time, to ſee them ſo little, ſo very little, concerned for the Salvation of their precious and immortal Souls, which are ſo vaſtly preferable to their Bodies, and are much more certainly in Danger of a Death upon them, a Death which far exceedeth that which the Body is liable to, both in its Weight, and in its Duration; I ſay, is it not ſtrange, that thoſe, who call themſelves Men, who glory in their Reaſon, and value themſelves upon their Un-

* This was firſt preached at the Time, when the mortal *Small-Pox* raged in the Town.

derſtanding,

derſtanding, ſhould act a Part ſo unworthy of themſelves, and contrary to all the Principles and Dictates of right Reaſon! Here, if any where, the *Proverb* of *Solomon* holds good, in the full Extent of it, and he is *the prudent Man*, who, upon the *Foreſight of the Evil*, the Danger his Soul, his true Self, is in, *hideth himſelf*, getteth out of the Way of it as faſt as he can; whilſt he is the moſt *ſimple*, and fooliſh Creature imaginable, *who paſſeth on* ſtill, in his wicked Ways, ruſhing into the Jaws of Death, and Damnation, even when he ſeeth it, till, at length, the ſevere Puniſhment, which he hath juſtly deſerved for his Folly, taketh faſt hold upon him, and it becometh too late for him to think of eſcaping.

The Words I have read are expreſſive of the great Concern of every wiſe, and prudent Perſon, and ſhould be the Matter of the moſt ſerious, and earneſt, Sollicitude of every one of us all, here before the Lord; *What muſt I do to be ſaved?*

The Introduction, and Occaſion, of theſe Words, as laid down in the Context, are very remarkable; for therein we have a wonderful Diſplay of the ſovereign, and rich, Grace of God, in pitching upon ſo notoriouſly wicked a Perſon, as the *Philippian* Jaylor, (the Perſon ſpeaking in my Text,) and in ſuch a Manner, and at ſuch a Juncture, recovering of him from the very Brink of Death, and Hell, into a State of Salvation.

The ſacred Hiſtorian acquainteth us, that, as *Paul* and *Silas*, thoſe eminent Servants of God, were preaching the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, and, in his Name, working of Miracles, to confirm the Truth of their divine Miſſion, at *Philippi*, a noted City in *Macedonia*, the Maſter of a certain Damſel, being deprived of the Gains ſhe brought him, by Divination, by Means of the holy *Apoſtles* having commanded the foul Spirit to depart out of her, ſtirred up the Rabble to join with him in a Tumult, and

laid hold on thoſe holy Men of God, and haled them before the Magiſtrates of the City; who, at the Clamor of the People, very contrary to the *Roman* Manner, ordered them to be beaten, and then to be committed to cloſe Priſon. The *Jail Keeper*, fierce, and cruel enough, in his Temper, and more ſo in his Enmity againſt thoſe excellent Miniſters of Chriſt, *thruſt them into a Dungeon, and faſtened their Feet in the Stocks.* But, while thoſe Servants of the moſt high God ceaſed not to *ſing his Praiſes*, under all the Inſults they met with from Men, even *in a Priſon*, and *at Midnight*, the God whom they ſerved wonderfully appeared for their Help, and cauſed an *Earthquake*, moſt probably confined to the Bounds of the Court of the Priſon, which ſhook the Foundations of the Priſon Houſe, in ſo terrible a Manner, as to *force open the Priſon-Doors*, and, at the ſame Inſtant, ſent an Angel to looſe the Bonds, and take the Fetters, from off the Priſoners, and ſet them at Liberty.

The *Jaylor*, awakened out of his Sleep, in a very great Fright, at the Noiſe, and Shock of the Earthquake, got up to ſee what was the Matter, and whether his Charge was ſafe, and coming to the Priſon, he was more exceedingly ſurprized to find the Doors ſtanding wide open; and, concluding that the Priſoners had made their Eſcape, and that, according to the *Roman Law*, he ſhould now ſuffer that Death, which he ſuppoſed would have been inflicted upon them, he therefore, to avoid that Puniſhment which he imagined would inevitably fall upon him, furiouſly attempted to lay violent Hands upon himſelf; for *he drew out his Sword, and would have killed himſelf*, Ver. 27; by which he plainly manifeſted the Raſhneſs, and Cruelty, of his Temper, and the violent Fierceneſs of his Paſſions.

But, whilſt as yet the Point was only aimed at his Breaſt, and before his trembling Hands could exe-

cute

cute the hasty Orders of his turbulent Passions, *Paul* and *Silas*, more compassionate to him that had abused them, than he was to himself, (imitating herein the Example of their great Master, who sought the Welfare, and not the Hurt, of his worst Enemies) when they saw what he was about to do, eagerly *cried with a loud Voice, saying, Do thy self no Harm, for we are all here.* Ver. 28. This Behaviour of those Men of God, as well it might, surprized him with Joy, and Wonder; with Joy, to find his Life safe from Danger, by the Presence of all the Prisoners, who, he supposed, were fled, and gone; and with Wonder, to find those very Men, whom he had, but a little before, basely insulted, to become the chief Instruments of his Preservation; forbearing to hazard his Life, by endeavouring to preserve their own by an Escape from their Confinement, which they might easily, and justly enough, have done, and so obligingly staying his Hand, when he was just going to embrue it in his own Blood; and thus recover him from the Edge of the Precipice, who sought to tumble them down into Destruction. This Goodness was more than *Roman* Bravery! In the midst of his Surprize, *he called for a Light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before* Paul *and* Silas. Ver. 29. Most probable it is, when he called for a Light, and sprang into the Prison, that he had no other Design than to see if, indeed, the Prisoners were safe, and to make them secure; but when he approached those holy Men, and beheld the Gravity, and Composedness, of their Countenances, how sedate and calm, how majestick and serene, they were, under the Convulsions of Nature, which had happened, and which had thrown him into such an Agony of Mind, as filled his Body with Trembling, from which he could not as yet free himself, it struck him with an Awe and Reverence of them; and this, together with the Thoughts of

their

their Goodneſs to him, in preſerving his Life, when it was in their Power to have ſuffered him to hurry himſelf into his own Deſtruction, raiſed in his Mind a very great Veneration for them, as more conſiderable Perſons than they, at firſt, appeared to him to be, and procured from him thoſe Tokens of Civility, and Reſpect, which he now ſhewed them, in his falling down before them, and bringing them out of their cloſe Confinement.

Whether the *Jaylor* had, before this, heard any Thing, diſtinctly, about the Doctrines of the Goſpel, which *Paul*, and *Silas*, preached, is uncertain; but, doubtleſs, thoſe holy Men now took the Opportunity, while, under the Influence of what had happened, the Fierceneſs of his Temper was greatly abated, and his Mind was more diſpoſed to Civility, and Thoughtfulneſs, to beſtow their charitable Inſtruction upon him, and ſhew him, that there is a great God, who made Heaven, and Earth, and all Things that are therein; and that this ſurpriſing Thing, which had now befallen them, was no other than the Effect of the over-ruling Providence of that God, whom they ſerved; who, in Anſwer to their Prayers to him, had thus ſignally appeared for them, as, by this wonderful Work, to procure their Enlargement; and, at the ſame Time, doubtleſs, they acquainted him with the Neceſſity of his ſerving this great God, and making his Peace with him, thro' his Son Jeſus Chriſt, that he might be forever happy in his Favour; and let him know, what a terrible Thing it would be, if he ſhould at laſt be found in a State of Sin, and Rebellion, againſt this God: And now the Holy Spirit of God ſat in irreſiſtably with the awful Providence, and ſome ſuch Diſcourſe (we may well ſuppoſe) the Priſoners had with him, and ſhewed him to himſelf, what a vile wretched Sinner he had been all his Life long; and awakened in him a greater and more weighty Concern, than

than that of the Safety of his Body, even what he ſhould do to obtain the Forgiveneſs of his Sins, and the everlaſting Salvation of his Soul. He that juſt before had been ſo ſevere to thoſe Servants of God, as, without particular Direction, to thruſt them into a Dungeon, and faſten their Feet in the Stocks, and, perhaps, with the Rabble, looked upon them as the Troublers of their City, by their teaching of Cuſtoms which it was not lawful for them (they tho't) to obſerve, now entertained quite another Opinion of them, and treated them with the greateſt Reſpect, and Honour, and eſteemed them Men of God, and, as ſuch, addreſſed them with this moſt important Enquiry, *Sirs, What muſt I do to be ſaved?* Whatever his Thoughts had been, heretofore, about the Doctrine of Salvation, (if he had, indeed, heard any Thing about it) yet now, you ſee, he is awakened to a very great Concern to *know*, and a ready Willingneſs to *do*, all that was neceſſary in order to his Salvation; which evidently breathed the Temper and Spirit of one that was under the Pangs of the New Birth.

The Words are expreſſive of the deepeſt Concern of Mind that can be; like a Man in an Agony, he cried out, *Sirs, What muſt I do to be ſaved?* And it is plainly evident that, by being *ſaved*, he meant the eternal Salvation of his Soul; the Circumſtances he was in, and the Anſwer of the Apoſtle to him, clearly evinces this.

If you conſider the Circumſtances he was in, when he uttered this important Queſtion, you will find the Life of his Body was then in no Danger; the Earthquake was, probably, over; the Priſoners were ſafe with him, under his Command; the Fears, that aroſe in his Mind, about one, or other, or both, of theſe, were now at an End; he had got over his Fright, had had Time to compoſe himſelf to Decency, and good Manners, had attended to the Diſ-

courſe of the Priſoners with him ; and, though there was no particular Occaſion for any ſpecial Concern about the Safety and Welfare of his Body, yet you find him very ſollicitous to be *ſaved* ; he was convinced that he ſtill ſtood in Need of Salvation ; and what was the Salvation which he was apprehenſive he needed ? Was it the Salvation of his Body ? No ; that was already ſafe— It was therefore the Salvation of his Soul, not a temporal, but his eternal Salvation, that he was inquiſitive about. He was convinced that there is a great God, who made, and governs, the World ; he was ſenſible how highly he had offended this God, by a very vicious Courſe of Living ; and this led him to conſider, that his Soul, his rational and immortal Part, was in imminent Danger of periſhing ; and therefore it was this, that he was ſo greatly concerned for, and exceeding ſolicitous to preſerve.

And if we conſult the Anſwer which the *Apoſtle* and *Silas* gave, to the *Jaylor*'s Enquiry, it will put it beyond all Doubt ; that this was what they underſtood to be the genuine Intent of it, *What ſhall I do to be happy forever ? What Methods muſt I take to eſcape the Anger of God, and obtain an Intereſt in his Favour ?* For they ſaid to him, *Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved.*

Thus, it pleaſes God, ſometimes, to diſplay his ſovereign Grace, in calling Home unto himſelf, and unto Virtue, and Glory, ſo wicked a Perſon as this *Jaylor*, and that in a very extraordinary, and wonderful Way, and Manner ; he created a new Thing in the Earth, and, in his Wonder-working Providence, opened a Door of Mercy to him, and that, at a Time, when there was but a Step between him, and Death, and Damnation ; when the vile Creature was about to commit a Murder upon himſelf, and poſt himſelf down into everlaſting Perdition. What a glorious Inſtance is this, of the free, and rich Grace

of

of God, unto poor miſerable Sinners? By this, every one may ſee, that, though they have gone far, and long, in their Rebellions againſt the God that made them, there is ſtill Room for them to repent, and turn from all their Tranſgreſſions, and a Poſſibility that they alſo may obtain Mercy, and find Favour with the Lord.

And yet, you may obſerve, that God, as a wiſe Agent, treats him, as a rational Creature, in the very Article of his Converſion, and though his happy Change was brought about in ſuch an extraordinary Manner, yet, he is not forced to be happy, againſt his Will; but is firſt put upon ſerious Thoughtfulneſs relating to his ſpiritual State, and then filled with a deep Concern of Mind about his Salvation, and is made ſeriouſly inquiſitive after it, with an earneſt Deſire to know, and an hearty Willingneſs to do, whatſoever was requiſite to his being ſaved. *Sirs, What muſt I do to be ſaved?*

And what was his great Concern ought to be ours alſo; for we too have Souls within us, equally in Danger of periſhing, and our moſt ſerious Thought and Care, Induſtry and Diligence, are neceſſary, in Order to their being ſaved. This, therefore, is the Doctrine, which, by divine Aſſiſtance, I ſhall diſcourſe to you on, from theſe Words; *viz.*

DOCTRINE.

It is of the higheſt Concernment to periſhing Sinners, to be very ſollicitous, what they ſhall do to be ſaved; or, to know, and practiſe, all that is neceſſary, in Order to their Salvation.

In ſpeaking to this Doctrine, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew you,

I. What it is to be ſaved; or, What is that Salvation which periſhing Sinners ſtand in Need of?

II. That

II. That periſhing Sinners may be ſaved; or, there is a Poſſibility, notwithſtanding their preſent miſerable Condition, that they may be eternally ſaved.

III. That periſhing Sinners muſt know, and practiſe, all that is neceſſary, in Order to their Salvation; or, there is ſomething to be done, by them, that they may be ſaved.

IV. This is a Matter of the higheſt Concernment to them, and therefore they ought to be moſt ſeriouſly ſollicitous about it.

I ſhall, as God ſhall enable me, offer ſome Things, diſtinctly, to each of theſe Heads; and I begin with the firſt of them, at this Time; *viz.*

I. To ſhew you what it is to be ſaved; or, what is that Salvation which periſhing Sinners ſtand in Need of? And,

1. More generally.

Now, to be ſaved, in the Language of the ſacred Scripture, meaneth, for poor Sinners to be reſcued from all that Infelicity which they are affected with, or in Danger of, and to be brought to the Enjoyment of all that Happineſs, Satisfaction, and Joy, which they want, and are capable of: That is, to be delivered from Evil, and inſtated in the Poſſeſſion of all that is truly Good. And foraſmuch as the human Nature is conſtituted, not only of a fleſhly Body, but a ſpiritual Soul, therefore our Salvation is to be conſidered in its Reſpects unto each of theſe eſſential Parts of the Man, though as having its chief Reference to the ſpiritual Part in us.

That there is ſuch a Thing as, what is generally called, the Soul, or, more ſtrictly ſpeaking, a Spirit, very diſtinct from groſs Matter, which goeth into the very Eſſence of the human Nature, and is the grand Characteriſtick of it, is very evident, in that

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we think, and reaſon, upon abſent Objects, and are capable of examining, and judging, of ſuch Things, as our Senſes have nothing to do with ; all of which lieth wholly out of the Reach of mere Matter, howſoever diſpoſed, and modified, figured, or moved ; and is abundantly confirmed to us in the ſacred Pages, which aſſure us, Job xxxii. 8. That *there is a Spirit in Man, and the Inſpiration of the Almighty giveth them Underſtanding :* And Zech. 12. 1. That *the Lord formed the Spirit of Man within him.* That this rational Spirit in Man is capable of a State of true Happineſs, in the Enjoyment of all that is refreſhing, and delightful, to it, there is not the leaſt Reaſon to doubt, becauſe it is capable of perceiving what is agreeable to its Nature : And, there is as little Reaſon to queſtion, whether Man, in his preſent Condition, is deſtitute of that Happineſs he is capable of, or no : For, there are innumerable Things, beſides the conſtant Uneaſineſs of his Mind, to convince him, that he is ſo far from being happy, at preſent, that he really is in a miſerable Condition. Not only are the Bodies of Men ſubject to various Pains, Diſeaſes, Caſualties, and Death, but there are alſo certain Diſtempers, Maladies and Diſorders, and what is called Death, ſutable to their Nature, brought upon the Souls of Men, by the firſt Apoſtacy of the human Nature. Hence, the Divine Oracles inform us, that we are, by Nature, *Dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins*, Eph. ii. 1, 2, 3. We are under the Power of a ſpiritual Death, already begun upon us, in our *walking according to the Courſe of this World, according to the Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spirit that now worketh in the Children of Diſobedience* ; and by having *our Converſation in the Luſts of the Fleſh, fulfilling the Deſires of the Fleſh, and of the Mind* : And, as the Conſummation of this Death, *we are Children of Wrath* ; Heirs to the Wrath and Vengeance of an almighty God : And that this is not

a Condition peculiar to any particular Sett of Men, as of thoſe that finally go on in their Sin, the *Apoſtle* ſheweth us, by adding theſe Words, *even as others*; that is, we *Jews*, as well as *Gentiles*, we *Apoſtles*, as well as the Reſt of Mankind, yea, *we*, who through the Grace, and Favour, of God, are freed from the Dominion of Sin, and are brought into a State of Peace and Friendſhip with God, as well as thoſe who are yet the Servants of Sin, and at Enmity againſt God; that is, this is the ſad Condition of all Mankind, and that *by Nature*, as he adds: Which plainly teacheth us, that all Men, even *by Nature*, by their natural Deſcent from the firſt Man, or, as they come into this World, and while as yet the regenerating Grace of God has not wrought a Change in them, are languiſhing, and dying, under the Diſtempers of their Minds, and are ready, every Moment, to fall under that Wrath which compleateth the Death of the Soul, and will be the Conſummation of Miſery upon them.

Now, becauſe the Sinner, as ſuch, is thus periſhing in his Iniquity, therefore he wanteth to be ſaved from all that he already feeleth, and all that he is in Danger of; and becauſe Sin has forfeited Heaven, and Happineſs, as well as has expoſed him to Wrath, and the Curſe, therefore he ſtandeth in Need of the Happineſs, which he hath loſt, as truly as to be delivered from the Miſery he feels, or fears: And hence to be ſaved, includeth in it, what is called, a privative, and a poſitive, Felicity; or, a Deliverance from every Evil, which the Man is ſubject to in Body, and in Soul, and a Recovery to the full Poſſeſſion of all the Good, which he is deſtitute of: both of which the periſhing Sinner abſolutely needeth.

And, accordingly, I ſhall now

2. More particularly ſpeak to theſe two Heads.

1. For the Sinner to be ſaved is, for him to be

be delivered from all that Evil which he is ſubject to.

2. For the Sinner to be ſaved is, for him to be brought to the full Poſſeſſion of all that poſitive Good, which he is deſtitute of, and wanteth.

1. For the Sinner to be ſaved is, for him to be delivered from all that Evil which he is ſubject to. For, while the Man remaineth, at preſent, under the Power of any Evil whatſoever, or is ſubject to any hereafter; any Thing that breaketh in upon the regular, healthful, Temperament of his Body, and gives him Pain and Uneaſineſs, and much more that which reduceth it to Duſt, and Aſhes; or, that is contrary to his Nature, as a rational intelligent Agent, capable, of diſcerning between Good, and Evil, and of delighting it ſelf in that which is juſt, and equitable, fit, and decent; or, that is deſtructive of his Well-being, either by cauſing a Separation between his Soul, and Body, or, that depriveth his Soul of her inward Satisfaction, and Joy, and the Fruition of that which is the only ſolid Foundation of her Comfort; and, in the Room thereof, produceth Perplexities, Horror, and Anguiſh in the Mind; it is very evident, that all this while, the Man is in a State of real Miſery: And conſequently, all that Guilt, and Depravity, which is contrary to the very Nature of the Soul, as a ſpiritual intelligent Agent, and all that Puniſhment, which bringeth a Diſſolution upon the conſtituent Parts of the human Nature, or which ſtripeth the Soul of her Peace, and Comfort, and becometh burdenſome to her, are the great Evils which Sinners want to be delivered from. That is to ſay, the Sinner's Salvation conſiſteth in a Deliverance from all moral, and penal Evil.

The Diſtribution of all Evil into Moral, and Penal, the Evil of Sin, and the Evil of Puniſhment, ſeemeth, to me, to be too juſt to admit of any Diſpute.

pute. For, whether the Evils, I call penal, come immediately from the Hand of God, or reſult from the ſettled Laws of Nature, or are occaſioned by the Actions of free Agents, in each of theſe, and every other Caſe, it amounteth to the ſame Thing; they originate from the Will and Determinations of the ſupreme Ruler of the World, who has eſtabliſhed the Laws of Nature, and employeth what Inſtruments he pleaſeth, to bring about his own Deſigns: And they are Puniſhments, in the original Conſtitution, whatever be the kind Ends, and Purpoſes, they may be overruled unto, in his infinite Wiſdom, and Goodneſs; becauſe, had Man never ſinned, he would have never ſuffered. Perfect Purity inferreth perfect Happineſs, according to the particular Nature, which is the Subject thereof. Nor can it, in Reaſon, be ſuppoſed, that an infinitely righteous, and good God would ever inflict any Sort of ſuffering upon a perfectly innocent, and unconſenting, Being. So that there ſeemeth, to me, to be no Foundation for a real Diſtinction of natural Evils, from Penal, in the original Conſtitution, reſpecting moral Agents. Here then,

1. The Salvation, ſet before us in the Goſpel, conſiſteth in a Deliverance from all moral Evil. By moral Evil ſome underſtand whatſoever is contrary to the Sentiments of a Man's own Mind, concerning Right, and Good. From hence the Libertine takes Encouragement to indulge his vicious Appetites, under the Pretext of this vain Plea, that there is no ſuch Thing as moral Good, or Evil; that the Sentiments of Men's Minds are various, and one thinketh that to be Evil, which another thinketh to be Good, for him; and conſequently (they ſay) the Difference between Good, and Evil, ariſeth, only from the different Sentiments of Men, and not at all from any Thing of an eſſential Difference in the Nature of Things. And yet, even theſe Favourers

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of Vice, Confounders of Order, and Deſtroyers of all Good, will all of them, to a Man, as readily grant, as other Men, that their Children, and Servants, ought to honour, and obey them ; that every Act of Kindneſs they do for another ought to be gratefully acknowledged ; and that no Man ought to do them any Injury, or Injuſtice. And has not every Man as good Reaſon to demand, and expect, the ſame Treatment from others, as they have ? And what is this ? but to acknowledge that there is an eſſential Difference between Juſtice and Injuſtice, Gratitude, and Ingratitude, Kindneſs, and Cruelty. And indeed, every Man, at firſt Sight, approveth, and is pleaſed with Acts of Juſtice, and Goodneſs, and has an inward Reluctance and Abhorrence, at Acts of Injuſtice, Oppreſſion, and Cruelty. But whether every Man has a clear Diſcernment of what is Right, or no, this hindereth not but that there is an eſſential Difference between Right, and Wrong, whatever be the Prejudices, and Bias, upon his Mind, which preventeth his clear Perception. For, truly, moral Evil is not, ſo properly, what is contrary to the Sentiments of a Man's own Mind, as what is contrary to right Reaſon. For a Man's Mind may be warped, or clouded, but right Reaſon ever remaineth the ſame. And becauſe right Reaſon reſulteth from the original Intellect, the Fountain of Knowledge and Rectitude, therefore the clearer Diſcoveries are made to us of his Mind and Will, ſo much the plainer ſhall we diſcern between moral Good, and Evil. And becauſe this original Intellect is our ſupreme Lord, who hath given Being to us, and has furniſhed us with all our Powers, and hath ſo far made known his Mind, and Will, to us, as to ſhew us what is morally good, or evil, therefore moral Evil conſiſteth in a Contrariety to his Will, made known unto us, and moral Good lieth in a Conformity to his Will ; the Sentiments of our own Minds, when

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we have a clear Diſcernment of Things, agreeing thereunto.

So that moral Evil may be conſidered, either, as a direct Violation of the Law of our Maker, which is diametrically contrary to Right, and Equity, and rendereth us guilty; or, as ſuch a Perverſion of our Powers, from that regular Order our Maker appointed for them, as that we do not, and cannot, without divine Aids, exerciſe them, in their Regards to moral Good, and Evil, as we ought to do; and this rendereth us depraved. Guilt, therefore, and Depravity, are the two great Branches of moral Evil, which it is one main End, and Deſign, of the Salvation, revealed to us in the Goſpel, to deliver the Sinner from; the particular Conſideration of which, I have not now Time to enter upon, but muſt leave to the Afternoon.

SERMON

SERMON II.

ACTS XVI. 30.

And said, Sirs, What must I do to be saved?

I Began, in the Morning, to consider the Nature of that Salvation which is proposed to us in the Gospel, and said, it includeth in it a Deliverance from all that Evil which the humane Nature is subject to, whether Moral, or Penal; and that moral Evil is to be considered as comprehending both Guilt, and Depravity, in it. I shall now, by divine Assistance, go into a more particular Consideration of that Guilt, and Depravity, which we are saved from; and therefore, I observe,

(1.) The Sinner is said to be saved, when he is delivered from all that Guilt which is justly chargeable upon him. 'Tis a most sad, and melancholly Truth, That every Man is a Sinner; there is a dreadful Charge against him, a mighty and heavy Load of Guilt, lying upon him; Part of which Guilt he brought into this World with him, and Part thereof he has contracted, whilst he has tabernacled in the Flesh.

1. Part of his Guilt, I ſay, every Sinner has brought into the World with him. It very much puzzled the Wits of former Ages, and has exerciſed the bright Genius's of the preſent to give a ſatisfactory Account, how Moral Evil entred into our World. If it be aſked, How came the firſt Man to ſin, and be obnoxious to ſuffering? The Anſwer ſeemeth not to be difficult; *viz.* Whatever Abuſe a free Agent ſhould make of his Powers, is unavoidably, and in itſelf, vicious and ſinful; and whatſoever is ſinful, neceſſarily inferreth Puniſhment: And it can no more be inconſiſtent with the Perfections of the great Maker of the World, that a free Agent ſhould be left to abuſe his Powers, than it is a Contradiction to them, for him to make a free Agent; which, I ſuppoſe, none will be ſo hardy as to affirm. However, all we are now properly concerned about is, how Sin and Suffering have taken Place upon the Humane Race; or how can we account for what we plainly ſee, that Men are ſinful, and liable to ſuffer? Whence ariſes this Sinfulneſs of our Nature, and the Puniſhments we are ſubjected to? There is no Diſpute, whether a Man that perſonally violates the divine Law, becometh guilty; but whether all Mankind are chargeable with Guilt before God, upon the Account of *Adam*'s Tranſgreſſion, doth not appear ſo evident to ſome. Yet, whatever be the Sentiments of Men of deeper Penetration, I cannot but conclude, from the Scripture-Account of this Matter, and, I think, from the Reaſon of Things, that every Child of *Adam*, deſcending from him, in the ordinary Way of Generation, becometh legally guilty of his firſt Tranſgreſſion. For the Proof of this, I ſhall confine myſelf to the Scripture-Account of this Matter, which ſeemeth, to me, neceſſarily to infer it. What leſs did *David* mean, when he ſaid, (Pſal. li. 5.) *Behold, I was ſhapen*, (or brought forth) *in Iniquity, and in Sin did my Mother conceive me*;

me ; but to notify to us, that we all come guilty into this World ? For, certainly, *David* did not intend, by that Paſſage, to give us an Account of any particular Sin of his Mother, as if ſhe had been guilty of any unlawful Commerce, which rendred him an illegitimate Conception, and Birth : In this his Father would have been as deeply concerned, as his Mother, and it may be more ſo, whom, yet, he takes no Notice of : And, beſides, *David* being *Jeſſe*'s Eighth Son, rendereth it very unlikely, that there ſhould be any criminal Congreſs, in the begetting of him. But it is evident that *David* ſpake of that Crime which he looked upon as *his own*, a Guilt chargeable upon *himſelf*, and that from his very *Birth*, yea, from his very *Conception* ; and therefore before he could have perſonally violated any Law. Nor is there any Reaſon to ſuppoſe, that *David* ſpake of this as a particular Caſe, and what was appropriated to himſelf only, to be thus guilty from the Birth and Conception, but it is that which is common to all Mankind with him ; which therefore ſpeaks the univerſal Guilt of the humane Nature, by the Apoſtacy of *Adam*. And, what leſs, than the univerſal Guilt of all Mankind, by Virtue of the firſt Man's Tranſgreſſion, could the Apoſtle *Paul* intend, when he ſaid, *Wherefore, as by one Man, Sin entred into the World, and Death by Sin ; and ſo Death hath paſſed upon all Men, for that all have ſinned ?* Rom. v. 12.

I am very ſenſible that great Pains have been taken by ſome, of late, as well as by *Eraſmus*, and others, formerly, to evade the Force of this Text, as a Proof of the original Guilt of *Adam*'s firſt Sin, or Fall, cleaving to the humane Nature, by torturing it, in ſuch a Manner, as to make it ſpeak little ſhort of evident Nonſenſe. But after all, let the unprejudiced Reaſon of Mankind but duly obſerve the Intention, and Force, of the *Apoſtle*'s Reaſoning, in this,

and the preceeding, and the following *Verſes*, and nothing can be more evident than, that he deſigned a Proof of the Sin, and Guilt, of all Mankind, in, and by, the Sin, and Fall, of the firſt Man. For the *Apoſtle* plainly aimed, at the giving a Reaſon of the Neceſſity of Chriſt his dying to reconcile us unto God, and the illuſtrating the Grace of God, in ſending his Son into the World, to be made a Sacrifice of Atonement for us; *wherefore* is all this? And he giveth this ſtrong Reaſon, and Neceſſity, for it, that all were originally, and by Virtue of the firſt Sin, guilty, and therefore, without Chriſt's atoning Sacrifice, all were dead: *By one Man, Sin entred into the World, and Death by Sin, and ſo Death hath paſſed upon all Men, for that all have ſinned.* What Argument would there be in the *Apoſtle*'s Words, why Chriſt ſhould die for us, if all were not dead? And, what Conſequence would there be, from one Man having ſinned, and deſerved Death, to the paſſing the Sentence of Death upon all Men, if the Sin of that one Man were not chargeable upon all, and did not neceſſarily bring the Sentence of Death upon all Men, as well as upon himſelf? And what Juſtice could there be, in the Sentence of Death paſſing upon all Men, for the Sin of that one Man, if all Men were not, ſome Way or other, in the Eye of the Law, and Juſtice of God, truly guilty of that Sin? Either, by that one Man being conſtituted the publick Head of all Men, or by his including all Men in his Loins, or, poſſibly both Ways. Some have made a mighty ado, in their Criticiſms upon the *Greek* Phraſe, here uſed, (*eph o*) rendering it, *Quatenus, as far forth*, or *ſo far*, as if by this they thought to overthrow the Force of the *Apoſtle*'s Reaſoning; but, alas, they forget, that this *Prepoſition*, with a *dative Caſe*, as *Grammatians* ſpeak, uſually ſignifieth *in*; and we have a famous Inſtance among many others, of this very

Phraſe,

Phraſe, as uſed by the ſacred Writers, which neceſſarily determines the Senſe of it; I mean, in the Goſpel of *Mark*, (Mark ii. 4.) where we are told, that *when they could not come nigh unto him*, (namely Chriſt) *for the Preſs, they uncovered the Roof where he was; and when they had broken it up, they let down the Bed, (eph o) in which the ſick of the Palſy lay.* And accordingly the plain Meaning of the Phraſe, in the *Apoſtle*'s Uſe of it here, is, *in whom*, that is, in that firſt Man, in *Adam*, *in whom all have ſinned.* That is, all are truly guilty of that firſt Sin, or Lapſe of the firſt Man, which brought Death into the World; and therefore the Sentence of Death hath been paſſed upon all Men, as well as upon that one firſt Man, as the juſt Deſert of his firſt Tranſgreſſion, and all are become dead; and therefore there is a Neceſſity of Chriſt's dying for us, both to recover us from Death, and reconcile us to God.

But that no Stone may be left unturned, by which if poſſible, to undermine the Doctrines of the Goſpel, we are told, by ſome of the admired Writers of the preſent Age, That *Death is no Puniſhment*, and therefore no Sign and Proof of Sin, and Guilt lying at the Door. But, I beſeech you, was not Death threatened, as a Puniſhment, to *Adam*, in Caſe of his Diſobedience? Was not the Sentence of Death pronounced upon him, in the Day of his Apoſtacy, and this, as the Fulfilment of the Threatning, and as a deſigned Puniſhment upon him, for his having tranſgreſſed the Law of his Maker? Was it not this very Sentence, *Duſt thou art, and unto Duſt ſhalt thou return*, or *dying thou ſhalt die*, that rendred the *humane Nature*, or *Adam*, and his *Poſterity*, mortal? And after all this, is not Death a Puniſhment? No, ſay ſome; becauſe God knoweth how to make Death to become a Mercy to us, and recompence the Loſs of the preſent Life, with a State of everlaſting Life, and Happineſs, in Heaven. And it is

well for us, that an infinitely wiſe, and good, God will abundantly make up for all the Sorrows, and Labours, and Loſs, of the preſent Life, by conferring an everlaſting Life, upon his People, in a better World. But, all this while, it is forgotten, that this is the ſpecial Grace of the Goſpel-Diſpenſation, to render Death a Mercy to us; whereas the Sentence of Death is denounced, upon the humane Nature, antecedent to all the Grace of the Goſpel, and under that original Diſpenſation of the Law, or Covenant of Works, as 'tis called, which knew of no Act of Favour to a guilty Creature, nor any Act of Puniſhment upon an innocent one. So that, under the original Conſtitution, either *Adam*'s Poſterity would not have been mortal, or elſe their Death is a Puniſhment upon them, and included in the Threatening. And, therefore, I conclude, that Death is, by the original Sentence of Heaven, a Puniſhment upon all Mankind, and conſequently, a plain Indication of the Intereſt, and Share, which all Mankind has in the Lapſe, and Guilt, of the firſt Man. Accordingly, the *Apoſtle* goes on to obſerve, Rom. v. 14. That *Death reigned from* Adam, *even over them that had not ſinned after the Similitude of* Adam's *Tranſgreſſion*: That is, over Infant Children, who had never violated any Law, by their own perſonal tranſgreſſing of it, as *Adam* had done. And further, the *Apoſtle* informs us, Ver. 17. *By one Man's Offence, Death reigned by One*: That is, it reigned over the whole humane Nature, by the one Offence of that one Man. And, to put it beyond all Diſpute, he adds, Ver. 18, 19. *By the Offence of one, Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation; for, by one Man's Diſobedience, many were made Sinners.* That is, by that one Man's Diſobedience, and Offence, all were rendred guilty, and ſubject to Condemnation. And when the *Apoſtle* ſays, of all, that they are, *by Nature, Children of Wrath*, Eph. ii. 3. it neceſſarily inferreth,

inferreth, that all Men are, by Nature, guilty, or they could not be, by Nature, Children of Wrath.

Nor can I ſee any Thing repugnant to right Reaſon, in conſidering the firſt Man, from whom all were to deſcend, as a common Head; and all his Deſcendants as ſharing, and partaking with him, in his Innocency, or Guilt, and the Fruits thereof. This Conception of *Adam* as a common and publick Head, in whom all Mankind were virtually included, and with whom they were to ſtand, or fall, the Scripture plainly leadeth us into, by oppoſing *Adam*, and Chriſt, as two publick Heads of two very different Stocks, and from whom very oppoſite Virtues and Powers flow; 1 Cor. xv. 22, 47. *As in* Adam *all die, even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive*;— *The firſt Man is of the Earth, the ſecond Man is the Lord from Heaven.* Now here it might be aſked, How are all made alive in Chriſt? Is it what naturally and neceſſarily followeth upon Chriſt's being made alive? Or is it not rather the Fruit and Effect of the Merits of Chriſt that Life is procured for us? Why thus Death is not merely conſequential upon the Mortality of the *firſt* Head, but the Effect of his Deſerts; ſo that as Righteouſneſs and Life are from the Merits of the *ſecond* Head, in like Manner is Sin and Death, the Fruit of the Tranſgreſſion of the *Firſt* to all his natural Deſcendants.

And if all Mankind were included in the Loins of *Adam*, which ſeemeth to be the Truth of the Caſe, the Reaſon, why all ſhould partake in his Guilt, is ſo much the ſtronger. But, after all, if we could not ſee into the Reaſon of the Thing, yet, ſince we have ſo plain, and full, Account of it in the holy Scriptures, it is to be numbered among the *Credenda*, the Things to be believed by us; and we may be ſatisfied in this, that the divine Mind knoweth how to reconcile it to his Juſtice, and Goodneſs, though we ſhould not be able to do it. So that I

reaſonably conclude, that there is ſuch a Thing as, an *Original Guilt*, chargeable upon every natural Child of *Adam*; or, that every Man is born into this World guilty, by Virtue of *Adam*'s firſt Tranſgreſſion. But then

2. There is a Guilt chargeable upon every Man, as that which he has perſonally contracted, by his own Diſobedience to the Law of God, his rightful Sovereign, while he has lived in this World. There is no Man that liveth to ſuch Years of Underſtanding, as that it may be properly ſaid of him, he acteth voluntarily, but what becometh guilty, by his perſonal Tranſgreſſions againſt the Divine Commandments, either, by doing what is forbidden, or, by leaving undone what is required: So that we may all ſay, in the Strain of the Apoſtle *James*, *In many Things we all offend*, Jam. iii. 2. For what is Sin, and Guilt, but as we are told, 1 Joh. iii. 4. *a Tranſgreſſion of the Law; whoſoever committeth Sin tranſgreſſeth alſo the Law.* And what Man is there to be found, amongſt all theDeſcendants from the firſt Man, that has not tranſgreſſed the divine Law innumerable Times, in Thought, in Word, and in Deed? The Law of our Sovereign is very extenſive, and reacheth not only to every Man, but to all of Man, to the Government of all our Actions, natural, civil, and religious, of all our Words, of what Kind ſoever, and of all the Thoughts that come into our Hearts; ſo that we cannot ſpeak a Word, nor think a Thought, any more than do an Action, which does not, ſome Way or other, fall under the Cognizance of the Law. And who, then, can ſay, I have kept my Hands clean, and my Heart is pure from mine Iniquity? Both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, are all under Sin; *for all have ſinned, and come ſhort of the Glory of God.* Rom. iii. 23. 'Tis a true Obſervation of the Preacher, Eccleſ. vii. 20. *There is not a juſt Man upon Earth, that doth good, and ſinneth not.*

And

And becauſe the Law is tranſgreſſed, therefore it bringeth its Charges, and Articles againſt the Sinner, that, in this and the other Inſtance, he has departed from the Rules of the Law, and become guilty, of doing what was plainly prohibited to him, and of neglecting to do what was poſitively required of him. For *he that offendeth* againſt a Law, by tranſgreſſing its Injunctions, or Prohibitions, *is guilty* ; Jam. ii. 10. and this the Law accuſes him, and paſſeth Sentence upon him, and condemneth him, for all his ſinful Violations thereof. And not only does the Sinner ſtand charged, and condemned, by the Law of God, for every Tranſgreſſion found upon him, but his own Mind taketh Part, with the Law, againſt him ; by witneſſing to all his ſinful Actions, and ſeverely reproaching him for them ; and thus the natural Conſcience, that is in every Man, joineth with the holy and righteous Law of God, in bringing in the Man as guilty, becauſe he has departed from the Law of his Maker, his Sovereign, and his Judge, which he was under the ſtrongeſt Obligations carefully to have obſerved. Agreeably the *Apoſtle*, in his Epiſtle to the *Romans*, obſerveth, *Rom.* ii. 14, 15. *The Gentiles are a Law unto themſelves*, — *their Conſcience alſo bearing Witneſs, and their Thoughts the mean while, accuſing of them.*

This ſheweth us, that Guilt is an Evil that is contrary to the very Nature of the Soul, as a ſpiritual, intellectual Agent, whoſe firſt Property, as ſuch a Being, is to act rationally, or, to do that which is right, and fitting to be done ; becauſe all Guilt ariſeth from an acting contrary to what is Right, and Equity, and is a doing of what ought not to have been done : And therefore it is, that the Soul cannot take a View of her own Sinfulneſs, in violating the divine Law, which is the Reſult of the higheſt Reaſon, and unſullied Intellect, without riſing up againſt herſelf, and charging her own Guilt Home upon

upon herſelf, with bitter Taunts and Reproaches; which is truly to be in a miſerable State, as being her own Tormentor.

This, therefore, is included in the Sinner's being ſaved, namely, for him to be delivered from all this Load of Guilt, which is juſtly chargeable upon him; for till this is done for him, he is under a Sentence of Condemnation, and continually expoſed to the Stings of an enraged Conſcience. The Soul is ſaved, when its high Crimes, and Miſdemeanors, are no longer imputed, or reckoned to it, but her Guilt is cancelled, and her Iniquity is taken away.

Though it be true, that the Soul cannot ſo ceaſe to be guilty, as to have it ſaid of it, that it has never done any Thing amiſs, yet it ceaſes to be guilty, as to the Imputation, or Charge of any Crime, or Blame, to it, for what it has done; it is delivered from the prevailing Force of any Accuſation againſt it, and is ſet *Rectus in Curia*, by a free, full, and abſolute Pardon of all its Tranſgreſſions. Hence the *Pſalmiſt* prayed, Pſal. li. 1. *Have Mercy upon me, O God, according to thy Loving kindneſs, according to the Multitude of thy tender Mercies, blot out my Tranſgreſſions*; and, Ver. 9. *Hide thy Face from my Sin, and blot out all mine Iniquities*: And he inſtanceth in one particular Sin, in ſuch Terms as theſe, Ver. 14. *Deliver me from Blood-Guiltineſs, O God of my Salvation*: By which he did not mean, to be delivered from the Act of ſhedding innocent Blood, for that was paſt, and could not be recalled; but he prayed, that the Guilt he had contracted, by ſhedding innocent Blood; might be pardoned, and forgiven to him, and never be articled againſt him; and, as a Fruit of this Pardon, he prayed, Ver. 12. that God would *reſtore to him the Joy of his Salvation*: That is, that he would graciouſly give him ſuch a Senſe of the Pardon of his Sin, as might reſcue his Mind from the inward Shame, and Confuſion, the Horror, and Anguiſh, which

which his Guilt had brought upon him; that his Guilt being taken away, his Soul might have reſtored to it, its loſt Peace and Joy, in a Senſe of the divine Favour towards him.

And becauſe all Sin carries, in the very Nature of it, the higheſt Affront, and Indignity, to our Sovereign, and Judge, as being the vileſt Inſult upon his Authority, and Contempt of his Law, which rendereth it unreaſonable to hope for a free, and full Pardon, without a due aſſerting the Honour of the Lawgiver, and the Rectitude of his Law, therefore it ſeemeth neceſſary, that a Mediator appear on our Behalf, who, by the Perfection of his Obedience, and the Validity of his Atonement, ſhould purchaſe the Forgiveneſs of Sin for us, and take away all our Guilt, by his bearing it for us, and ſo clear the Way, for the infinite Mercy of God to reach us, and cover all our Iniquities, and impute not our Tranſgreſſions to us. Hence the great Redeemer weareth the Name of Jeſus, *becauſe he ſaveth his People from their Sins.* Mat. i. 21.

(2) The Sinner is ſaid to be ſaved, when he is delivered from the Depravity, the Pollution, and Power, of Sin over him. For, there is not only a Guiltineſs chargeable upon the humane Nature, in having tranſgreſſed the Law of its Maker, but there is a Depravity alſo of that Nature, conſiſting in the perverting, and diſordering, of its Powers, by which it is defiled, and polluted, and brought under the Dominion of Sin; and this as the Reſult of the Apoſtacy, or Defection of the firſt Man from the Paths of Virtue.

It is, I think, readily acknowledged, on all Hands, that the infinitely wiſe, and good, and holy God, could not form a rational Creature, a moral Agent, with viciated Powers; that is to ſay, whoſe Powers ſhould be incapable of performing their ſeveral Offices, in that regular Manner, which its very Nature plainly declareth, it was intended they ſhould, and by which it would, in it ſelf conſidered, neceſ-

ſarily,

farily, and unavoidably, become ſubject to Diſorder, and Irregularity, in its Actions; becauſe, this would be evidently to make the moſt holy God the Author of Sin, than which nothing is more inconſiſtent with his very Nature. Accordingly, the ſacred Writings inform us, *Gen.* i. 27. That *God created Man in his own Image, in the Image of God created he him.* And, doubtleſs, this Image of God, in which Man was created, did not conſiſt only, nor chiefly, in that Dominion which God gave to him over the Creatures, but in the moral Rectitude, and Purity of his Nature; that is to ſay, in the perfect Harmony of his Powers, and the regular Subordination of the lower Powers to the Influence and Government of the higher; or, the Subjection of the Will, and Affections, and lower Appetites, to the Dictates of the ſupream Intellect in us. That this is, that Image of God, in which Man was at firſt created, is beſt underſtood by conſidering, wherein the divine Likeneſs is reſtored to the humane Nature; becauſe this ſheweth us what was loſt by the Fall, and therefore what our Nature was, at firſt, poſſeſſed of; and this, we are told, from the unerring Oracles of Truth, conſiſteth in a being *renewed in Knowledge, after the Image of him that created him*, Col. iii. 10. and *after God*, (that is, after the Image of God) *is created in Righteouſneſs, and true Holineſs.* Epheſ. iv. 24. Which plainly ſheweth, that that Image of God, after which Man was at firſt created, chiefly conſiſted in the Underſtanding, the pure Intellect, in us, having the Sway over us; and that, under the Influence thereof, all our Actings, whether, within ourſelves, or reſpecting thoſe about us, ſhould be right, and pure, and that there ſhould be nothing contrary to Equity, and Holineſs, found upon us.

Though this was the Condition of the humane Nature, as it came out of the Hands of God, yet, we may eaſily obſerve, that this is not the Caſe

with

with us at preſent; and that Man muſt be very ignorant of himſelf, or arrogantly ſtubborn, who will not own, that he findeth within himſelf, the ſad Want of this divine Image, and ſuch a Depravation of his Nature, as hath put his Powers out of their regular Courſe, and ſubjected his Reaſon, and Underſtanding, to the domineering Influence of his boiſterous Will, and turbulent Appetites, and Paſſions; ſo that he either ſeeth not what is right, and fitting for him to do, or, if he has ſome weak Proſpect thereof, yet he hath no Power to perform it. The uninlightened Heathen ſaw ſomething of this Depravity, and confeſſed it;* and we who enjoy the Benefit of divine Revelation cannot remain Strangers to this Depravity of our Nature, unleſs we wilfully ſhut our Eyes againſt the Light, or imagine ourſelves too big to entertain the Thought of what, we ſuppoſe, caſteth ſuch a Blemiſh upon us. But whatever be the Reproach brought upon us, by ſuch an univerſal Depravity, we find the ſacred Scriptures clearly painting out our Nature, in all the Deformity, and Uglineſs, of Corruption, Defilement, and Sinfulneſs, as blind to Reaſon, and under the Government of divers Luſts, and Paſſions, and that from the very Birth. Hence, as long ago as the early Days of *Job*, you have *Zophar* ſaying, Job xi. 12. *Vain Man would be wiſe, though Man be born like a wild Aſs's Colt.* Fond as Man is of his Wiſdom, and Sagacity, yet he is, by Nature, and from the Birth, as ignorant as the dull Aſs, as ungovernable, and intractable, as the wild Aſs, and as truly under the Influence, and Power, of his Appetites, as the very Brutes, which have nothing elſe to govern them. And what leſs can the *Pſalmiſt* mean,

* Hence were thoſe Sayings, *Nitimur inveetitum. Video meliora proboq; deteriora ſequor. Facilis Deſcenſus Averni, ſed revocare Gradum, ſuperaſq; evadere ad Auras, Hic Labor, Hoc Opus eſt.*

when

when he deſcribed the natural State of Man, as *corrupt*,—*they have all gone aſide, they are altogether filthy*,— *they have no Knowledge*. Pſal. xiv. 1, 3, 4. Hence alſo the Prophet *Iſaiah*, under the Similitude of a diſordered, defiled, Body, giveth us a lively Deſcription of our Depravity, ſaying, Iſa. i. 5, 6. *The whole Head is ſick, and the whole Heart faint ; from the Sole of the Foot, even unto the Head, there is no Soundneſs in it ; but Wounds and Bruiſes, and putrifying Sores.* And the Prophet *Jeremiah* giveth us an Account of the groſs Ignorance, and general Propenſity of Mankind to that which is Evil, ſaying, Jer. iv. 22. *They are ſottiſh Children ; they have no Underſtanding ; they are wiſe to do Evil, but to do Good they have no Knowledge.* And our bleſſed Saviour, who perfectly well underſtood Mankind, ſpeaketh of them, Matth. xii. 33. as *corrupt Trees*, that muſt *firſt be made good*, their Nature muſt be altered, before they can *bring forth good Fruit.* And, if our Saviour's Rule hold good, *That a Tree is known by its Fruits*, the univerſal Depravity of the human Nature is known, by the univerſal Inclination, and Tendency, there is in all Mankind, unto that which is evil and ſinful : Which every Man, by a little Obſervation may evidently perceive in himſelf. And hence, the *Apoſtle* tells us, in the latter Part of the ſeventh Chapter to the *Romans*, of *Sin dwelling in us* ; of *a Law in our Members warring againſt the Law of our Minds, and bringing us into Captivity to the Law of Sin* ; and that we are *ſold under Sin* ; and becauſe hereof, *in us, in our Fleſh, dwelleth no good Thing* ; and that we *cannot find how to perform that which is good.* In his Epiſtle to the *Epheſians*, the inſpired Writer further acquaints us, Eph. iv. 18. *That we have our Underſtandings darkened, being alienated from the Life of God, through the Ignorance that is in them, becauſe of the Blindneſs of our Hearts.* And can any Thing more

more plainly point out, the Depravity, Pollution, and Defilement, of the human Nature, and the Power, and Dominion which Sin hath over it, than this Account which the ſacred Scriptures gives us of it, as having our Underſtandings darkened, our Wills perverted, our Affections diſordered, and even *our Mind, and Conſcience defiled.* Tit. i. 15.

Nor need we to fear to look upon this Depravity, and Pollution, of our Nature, as a moral Evil, or to call it by the Name of SIN, for the Scripture plainly calleth it ſo ; Rom. vii. 17. *Sin that dwelleth in us* ; Rom. vi. 12. *Sin, that reigneth in our mortal Bodies* : And, *Sin, that worketh Death in us*, Rom. vii. 13. The *Apoſtle*, having obſerved, that *Sin, taking Occaſion by the Commandment, deceived him, and ſlew him*, ſtarted an Objection ; *Was then that which is good*, (as the Commandment is) *made Death unto me ?* To this he anſwered, *God forbid* ; *but Sin, that it might appear Sin, working Death in me, by that which is good, that Sin, by the Commandment, might appear exceeding ſinful.* That is, it is not the Commandment, but our own Corruption, that worketh Death. Sin ſheweth itſelf to be Sin, by its Oppoſition to the Commandment, and this operateth unto Death. 'Tis eaſy to obſerve, that Sin muſt be in us, before it can operate ; it cannot oppoſe the holy, juſt, and good Commandment before it has a Being in us ; and therefore it is in us radically, originally, 'tis wrought into our Make, and Conſtitution, ſince the Fall, and is that which operateth in us, to the breaking of the divine Commandment, and ſo worketh Death. Beſides, this Depravity of our Nature, and Power of Sin over us, is evidently a Defection from the original Law of our Make, and that Rectitude, and Purity, which the human Nature was at firſt formed in ; for it came out of the Hands of its almighty Creator very good ; and therefore this Depravity cannot but be

be a moral Evil, as every, even the leaſt, Departure, from what ought to be, truly is.

But, perhaps, ſome Man will ſay, How came the humane Nature to be thus univerſally depraved, and ſunk under the Power of Sin? To which I anſwer, that I am not aſhamed to acknowledge, that I know no more of the particular Manner of the communicating this Depravity, than I know how the Bones do grow in the Womb of her that is with Child; or whence the Wind cometh, and whither it goeth. Yet, I think, I may venture to affirm, in the general, that it is the Fruit of the Sin of the firſt Man. The concurring Influence of the Almighty Creator, and ſupream Ruler, of the World, is neceſſary to every Creature's regular Exerciſe of thoſe various Powers it is furniſhed withal. Whenever, therefore, this divine Influence is withheld from any Creature, the Powers of that Creature will be weakened, will be thrown into Darkneſs, Diſorder and Confuſion, and the Actings thereof will become irregular. And what is there more juſt, and reaſonable, than that a Creature, who wilfully acted irregularly, while under that divine Influence, ſhould have it withheld from him for the future? Which unavoidably renders his Nature depraved. And becauſe the human Nature, by its original Apoſtacy, forfeited the Concurrence of the divine Influences to render its Actions regular, therefore our Depravity is an evil Diſpoſition in us, communicated to us, from a Nature ſo evilly diſpoſed, by Virtue of its Apoſtacy from God: Though, at the ſame Time, it is allowed that repeated Acts of Sin ſtrengthen the Habits thereof. It appeareth exceeding ſtrange, to me, that any, who are ready enough to acknowledge, that the Fall has brought many Diſorders, and Weakneſſes, upon the human Body, ſhould ſuppoſe this to be all, and that the ſupreme Spirit, in us, is no Ways viciated, and tainted, thereby,

thereby, or, weakened, and disordered, in its Powers. For who can reasonably imagine, that the Body, which is but the bare Instrument in sinning, should be made to suffer in any of its Interests, and the Soul, or Spirit, the chief Agent in sinning, be allowed to escape unpunished. It seemeth, to me, that a pure Spirit upon its first Act of Sin, must unavoidably suffer in its Nature, in the Confusion it is thrown into, and the disorderly Working of its Powers; because the very first Act of Sin, it can be guilty of, necessarily carries in it, the irregular Exercise of its Powers; and the Appetites must have gained the Ascendency over the Intellect, before it could possibly fall into any Sin: And what can be more just, than for that Spirit to be left under the Government of its Appetites, which first, contrary to the Law of its Nature, subjected itself to their Rule over it? Is it not thus with fallen Angels? And why should it not be thus with fallen Man also? (Though, through the infinite, and distinguishing Goodness of God, there is a glorious Method proposed for the Recovery of Mankind from this Depravity, while there is none for fallen Angels.) How was it possible for fallen Man to communicate his Nature, to his Descendants, any otherwise than as it was, polluted, and depraved? For, *who can bring a clean Thing out of an unclean? Not one.* Job xiv. 4. And therefore, (Job xv. 14.) *What is Man, that he should be clean? And he which is born of a Woman, that he should be righteous?* And it may be, the various Disorders brought upon the Body, by the Lapse of the first Man, may necessarily involve the Spirit, while in Union to the Body, in this Depravity, and Subjection to Sin, by interrupting those clear Perceptions of the Mind, which otherwise it would have had, and by inflaming the Appetites, and Passions. For whatever weakneth Reason, and strengtheneth the Appetites,

bringeth a moral Pollution upon the human Conſtitution, and neceſſarily leadeth into Sin. Poſſibly, from this Conſideration it is, that the holy *Apoſtles* of our Lord, particularly *Paul*, ſo often ſtileth the Sinfulneſs of our Nature, *Fleſh*; and termeth the working thereof in us, *fleſhly Luſts*, and ſtigmatizes the Mind with the Brand of, a *fleſhly Mind*; and calleth upon us, *to mortify our Members which are upon the Earth*; to *crucify the Fleſh, with its Affections, and Luſts*; and to *make no Proviſion for the Fleſh, to fulfil the Luſts thereof.*

Now, from hence, we plainly ſee, that this Depravation of our Nature, is an Evil, which every Sinner, that is, every Man, needeth to be ſaved from; and therefore our Salvation conſiſteth, partly, in the Recovery of our Nature, from the Pollution, as well as from the Guilt of Sin. For, until the ſpiritual Part in us, is recovered from the uſurped Power of Fleſh, and Senſe, and the lower Appetites, and Paſſions; and is reſtored to the Throne in us, and gives Law to the Will, and Affections, and keepeth the Body under, bringing it into Subjection; that is, until the divine Image is renewed upon us, in Knowledge, and Righteouſneſs; the Man is not ſaved; but is a Servant unto Sin, a Drudge to the World, and a Slave to the Devil: And if there were no other Evil attending him, this were enough to render him an unhappy, and miſerable Creature.

This Part of our Salvation is accompliſhed for us, by the Son of God, in our Nature, undertaking to be the Head of all ſpiritual Influences to us, as *Adam* is the Head of all corrupt Ones; firſt purchaſing the Holy Spirit, and his divine Revelations, for us, and then ſending that Divine Spirit to accompany the Preaching of his Word, upon our Hearts, to open our Eyes, and turn us from Darkneſs, to Light, and from the Power of Satan, unto God; that thus enlightning

lightning of our dark Minds, and renewing our ſtubborn Wills, all that is amiſs in us may be rectified, and we may be enabled to put off, as concerning our former Converſation, the old Man, which is corrupt, according to deceitful Luſts, and may put on the new Man, and ſo have the Image of our heavenly Father renewed upon us. Therefore Chriſt is ſaid, *To give himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from Iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a peculiar People, zealous of good Works:* Tit. ii. 14. And we are ſaid, Chap. iii. 5. *To be ſaved by the Waſhing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt.* That is, we are ſaved, when there is that bleſſed Change produced in us, by Workmanſhip of the divine Spirit, whereby our Tempers are altered for the better, our Luſts are mortified, Sin is ſubdued, and Grace reigneth in, and over us, by our ſupream Intellect's being reſtored to its proper Aſcendency, and duly influencing of our Wills, and regulating our Affections; and thus we become the Children of God, having our Fruit unto Holineſs, and the End everlaſting Life.

This Work of Renovation in us, which is ſo great a Part of our Salvation, is, indeed, but begun in the Soul, and carried on unto greater Perfection, while we are in the preſent World, attended with the Remainders of Corruption in us, and ſurrounded with manifold Temptations; and will be perfected in the upper World, when Grace ſhall be compleated in Glory.

I ſhould now go on and conſider the ſecond Thing propoſed, namely, The Sinner's Salvation as including in it a Deliverance from all that Puniſhment which is due to him for his Sin: But I will ſhut up, at preſent, with a brief Reflection.

USE. See then, what a ſad, and lamentable, Condition Sin has brought all Mankind into; a moſt deplorable State indeed, a Condition from which

they ſtand in infinite Need of being ſaved; and yet from which they are utterly unable to ſave themſelves. To be guilty, and depraved, is the firſt born of Miſery, and the Inlet to every other Kind, and Degree, of Unhappineſs. And if ever any poor Creature can ſtand in Need of Salvation, moſt certainly thoſe who are chargeable with theſe do. Yet this is the lamentable Caſe of every individual Perſon, that is born into this World, in the ordinary Deſcent from the firſt Man: For *both Jews, and Gentiles, are all under Sin,— and the whole World is become guilty before God.* Rom. iii. 9, 19. This is the ſad Fruit, and Effect, of *Adam*'s Tranſgreſſion, that there never was, nor ever will be, any Man in the World, the Man Jeſus only excepted, but what is concluded under the Guilt of Sin, and depraved thereby.

Jeſus Chriſt, indeed, knew no Sin, he was holy, harmleſs, undefiled, and ſeparate from Sinners; *Satan* could find no Depravity in him, to faſten his Temptations upon, neither was Guile found in his Mouth; there was no original Guilt, by a Deſcent from *Adam*, cleaving to him, for he was neither included in his Loins, nor in his Covenant: But as for all others that have deſcended from *Adam*, by ordinary Generation, they come guilty, and polluted into this World, and are ſadly periſhing in their Iniquity. Our firſt Father ſinned, and we in him, and ſo all Men are under Sin, and in a State of Miſery, by Means of his firſt Tranſgreſſion.

As the human Nature, at firſt, came out of the Hands of its Maker, it was a pure, and a happy Creature; it knew no Imperfection in its Frame, was unacquainted with the Stings of Guilt, the Fury of its Paſſions, and an utter Stranger to every Degree of Miſery; it had no inward Guilt to abaſe, and torment it, nor any Diſorder to confound, and prey upon it. But, alas! how dreadfully has the Venom

of

of Sin poiſoned our very Souls! and the fell Monſter devoured us! The Fall has brought Ruin and Miſery, upon one of the moſt noble of the Creatures of God; it has ſtrip'd this high, and heaven-born Thing, of its primitive Luſtre, and Vigor, has invaded its Powers, and rendered them weak, and feeble, and laid it groveling in the Duſt, wallowing in the Mire, unable to help itſelf, and unworthy that any elſe ſhould; it has brought the ignoble Stain, and Blemiſh, of Guilt, and Pollution, upon it, baniſhed Peace from its Breaſt, and filled it with Shame, and Remorſe, with Regret, and Horror, rendered it a Terror to itſelf, an Offence to Heaven, and the Inſult of Devils; that well may we lament, in the Strain of the weeping Prophet, Lam. v, 16. *The Crown is fallen from our Head, wo unto us that we have ſinned.*

SERMON

SERMON III.

ACTS XVI. 30.

And said, Sirs, What must I do to be saved?

I HAVE made some Entrance upon the Consideration of these Words, the last Opportunity, and from them have noted this Doctrine; viz.

Doc. It is of the highest Concernment to perishing Sinners, to be very solicitous, what they shall do to be saved; or, to know, and practise, all that is necessary, in Order to their Salvation.

In speaking to this Subject, I proposed, by Divine Assistance, to shew,

I. What it is to be saved; or, what is that Salvation which perishing Sinners stand in need of.

II. That perishing Sinners may be saved; or, there is a Possibility, notwithstanding their present miserable Condition, that they may be eternally saved.

III. That perishing Sinners must know, and practise, all that is necessary, in Order to their Salvation; or, there is something to be done, by them, that they may be saved.

IV. This

IV. This is a Matter of the higheſt Concernment to them, and therefore they ought to be moſt ſeriouſly ſolicitous about it.

I have offered ſomething upon the firſt of theſe Heads, and ſaid,

I. For the Sinner to be ſaved is, for him to be delivered from all that Evil which he is ſubject to.

And,

II. For the Sinner to be ſaved is, for him to be brought to the full Poſſeſſion of all that poſitive Good, which he is deſtitute of, and wanteth.

Under the firſt of theſe, I conſidered Evil, as Moral, and Penal; and accordingly, the Sinner is ſaved,

1. When he is delivered from all moral Evil. As, when he is delivered from that Guilt, which he brought into the World with him, by Virtue of *Adam*'s Tranſgreſſion, and from all he has contracted by his perſonal Tranſgreſſions; and when he is freed from the Depravity of his Nature, and the Power of Sin over him.

I proceed now to ſay,

2. For the Sinner to be ſaved is, for him to be delivered from all that Puniſhment, which is due unto him for his Sin. Penal Evil comprehendeth in it all thoſe Sufferings, of every Sort, whether in Body, or in Mind, which the humane Nature is ſubject to. For I know of no Sorts of Suffering that a moral Agent could be ſubject to, under the original Conſtitution, which are to be looked upon as purely natural Evils, and do not fall under the Conſideration of Puniſhments. Who ever ſuppoſed that the perfect Spirits which attend the Throne of God, ever meet with any Sufferings? Nor could Man, in a State of perfect Innocency, be liable to ſuffer. All Suffering, therefore, is primarily, in the firſt In-

tention, and Design thereof, properly Penal, or a Punishment, and the Fruit, and Desert of Sin. Moral Evil inferreth Penal Evil; Guilt produceth Punishment, as the Cause the Effect: We are therefore told, Rom. vi. 23. *The Wages of Sin is Death.* Death is what flows from the Nature, and is the just Desert, of Sin. Therefore when God speaks of punishing any, it is ever because of Sin. Amos iii. 2. *I will punish you for your Iniquities:* And *Job* observed, Job xxxi. 3. *Is not Destruction to the Wicked, and a strange Punishment to the Workers of Iniquity?* Now, this seemeth to me to be the lamentable Case of every Child of *Adam*, that as he deriveth Guilt, and Depravity, from his first Parents, so he is justly liable to suffer Punishment, and the Sinner is, by Nature, perishing under the Sentence of Condemnation, which is out against him. This Punishment will ever actually succeed to Guilt, where the Crime is sufficiently known, and the Judge fully able to punish; unless, upon some weighty Considerations, the Sin be forgiven, and the Guilt taken away.

The Sanction of the Divine Law threatened Death, in Case of Disobedience, Gen. ii. 17. *Thou shalt surely die*; and the infinitely wise God meant as he said, as appeareth from the subsequent confirming of the Sentence, upon the fallen Creature. So that all that is included in the Sentence of Death is the Punishment due to the Sinner; and though, what this is, in the utmost Extent thereof, may not be so clearly understood from the Terms of this short Sentence, yet, it may be fully known, by considering the farther Revelation of the Divine Mind concerning it, which is but an Explanation of the original Terms: And accordingly, we find, that the primary Sentence of *Death*, included in it, (as we shall see presently) not only the Harbingers, and compleating, of Death, upon the Body, but the

Languishments,

Languiſhments, Uneaſineſs, and Pains of the Soul, while in Union to the Body, and its perfect Miſery hereafter. Here then we may diſtinctly conſider the Sinner's Salvation as conſiſting in a Deliverance, from that Death which the Body is ſubject to, and from that Death, and Miſery, which ſhall take Place upon the Soul of the Sinner, and all as the Puniſhment of Sin.

1. The Sinner's Salvation conſiſteth in a Deliverance from the Death of the Body, as the Puniſhment of Sin. Here obſerve,

1. The Death of the Body is, originally, the Puniſhment of Sin.

No Man, that I know of, diſputeth whether the real Death of *Adam*'s Body be included in the original Sentence denounced againſt him, as a Puniſhment upon him, in Caſe of his Diſobedience: But the Diſpute is, whether Death be threatned, and now taketh Place, upon *Adam*'s Poſterity, as a Puniſhment upon them.

I have, I confeſs, under the former Head of Guilt, very much anticipated myſelf, and proved Death to be a Puniſhment to *Adam*'s Poſterity, as well as to himſelf; nevertheleſs I will a little more diſtinctly conſider it. How far there might have been any natural Virtue in the *Tree of Life*, which *Adam*, if he had not ſinned, might freely have eaten of, to have preſerved the human Body from the Arreſts of Death, I am not able to ſay; but this I think, I may venture to affirm, that if *Adam* had not ſinned, he had not died. That almighty God, with whom it is eaſy, would have preſerved the Body of *Adam*, (which, whilſt in its State of Innocency, doubtleſs, differed very wide, in the Excellency of its Temperament, as well as external Beauty, from what it was after Sin had taken Place) ſo that it ſhould never have been ſubject to any Death, ſeemeth, to me, very evident, becauſe Death is threatned as a Puniſhment:

iſhment: And I cannot ſee, if the Body of *Adam* had continued immortal, but the Bodies of his Deſcendants muſt have been immortal alſo. But now we find that we inhabit mortal Bodies; that *we cannot continue here always*; *our Days are but few, our Age but as an Hand Breadth*; *our Life is as a Vapour, which appeareth for a little while, and then vaniſheth away*; and we all *know that God will bring us to Death, to the Houſe appointed for all the Living.* But why are we thus brought to Death? Why are our Bodies mortal? Truly, Sin is the Cauſe of it. The Apoſtle therefore ſaid, Rom. viii. 10. *The Body is dead becauſe of Sin.* The *Body is dead*, that is, is ſubject to Death, *becauſe of Sin*, that is, as the Puniſhment for Sin, which the Body is ſo much the Cauſe of, and to purify it from the Defilement of Sin. Thus, it is confeſſed, Death was a Puniſhment to *Adam*. But how can Death be a Puniſhment to *Adam*, and ſo great that the Threatning of it was ſuppoſed to be enough to deter him from ſinning, and yet be no Puniſhment upon his Poſterity? Does not the original Threatning import thus much that Death ſhould be a Puniſhment upon all that deſcend from *Adam*? *Dying thou ſhalt die*, may fairly be underſtood to include thus much in it, thy Nature ſhall become mortal, and all the Branches that ſpring from thee ſhall be ſubject to Mortality. Though the Poſterity of *Adam* are not expreſly mentioned, ſo neither is the Woman mentioned, who, according to the Scripture-Account, was included in *Adam*, as truly as his Children, when the Sentence of Death was firſt denounced; and therefore if that Sentence had any Reſpect to her that was to be taken from his Ribs, it had an equal Reſpect unto them that were to proceed from his Loins; and that it truly reſpected, and included, all Mankind, and that as a Puniſhment upon them, we have an inſpired Expoſitor aſſuring us, when he ſaid, Heb. ix. 27. *It is appointed*

appointed to Man once to die. It is evident the Apoſtle had his Eye upon the original Statute, by which Death was appointed as the Lot, and Portion, of Mankind; and where is this Statute to be found? But in that Tranſaction with *Adam*, in the Day of his Make, wherein the ſovereign Lord threatened Death, in Caſe of Diſobedience, and threatned it as a Puniſhment. And the ſame inſpired Writer has told us, 1 Cor. xv. 56. *The Sting of Death is Sin, and the Strength of Sin is the Law.* Where obſerve that the Apoſtle is ſpeaking of the Deſcendants from the firſt Man, and, ſays he, *the Sting of Death is Sin*, it is Sin that wounds us unto Death, and makes Death bitter, and terrible to us; but whence has Sin this Power? Is it merely by a natural Cauſality, or a bare Conſequence of *Adam*'s Mortality, that Sin brings Death upon us? No ſuch Matter, *the Strength*, or Power, *of Sin* over us, *is the Law.* It is the Law of God, that original Law, publiſhed to *Adam*, threatning Death as the Puniſhment of Sin, that giveth Sin its full Force, and Virtue, to bring Death upon us. So that Death is a Puniſhment upon all *Adam*'s Poſterity.

And to make this plainer yet, let us again conſider the Apoſtle's arguing in the *fifth Chapter* to the *Romans*, Verſe 12. *As by one Man Sin entred into the World, and Death by Sin, and ſo Death hath paſſed upon all Men, for that all have ſinned.* By *Death* here, as in the firſt Sentence of it, I underſtand all Penal Evil, of every Kind, which the human Nature is ſubject to, or capable of; and this Death taketh Place as a Puniſhment upon all Men, by Virtue of the Sin of one Man; *by one Man Sin entred into the World, and Death by Sin: Even ſo*, for in this Senſe the Particle *(kai, and)* is to be underſtood here, as it is rendered at the 14th Verſe of this Chapter, and in many other Places, *even ſo Death paſſed upon all Men*; as Death paſſed, in the Sentence thereof,

thereof, as a Puniſhment upon the *firſt Man*, *even ſo* it hath, in like Manner, paſſed upon *all Men*, and that for this Reaſon, *for that*, or rather, *in whom all have ſinned.* Therefore the Apoſtle goes on to add, Ver. 18. *Therefore by the Offence of one Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation.* Here it is plainly aſſerted, that the Sentence of Condemnation taketh Place upon *all Men*, for the Offence of *one Man.* And though the Words, *Judgment came*, and ſo the Words, *the free Gift came*, are not in the Original, in this *Verſe*, yet are they no unrighteous Interpretation, with an iniquitous Deſign to ſerve a Party-Cauſe, as ſome may imagine, but are the moſt juſt, and proper, Supplement, that could be, fetched from the general Deſign, and from the expreſs Words, of the *Apoſtle*, in the 16th Verſe. So that the plain and evident Intention of the Apoſtle here, is to ſhew us, that as the Sin, or Lapſe, of the firſt Man, brought Sin upon all Men, ſo did it Death alſo as the Puniſhment of Sin. In a Word, It is granted that all *Adam*'s Poſterity are mortal; now, had the Grace of the Goſpel never appeared, would their Death have been a Puniſhment, or only, a Suffering to be made up to them in another State?

But I would obſerve a little farther upon the original Sentence, that the Form of it, which in the *Hebrew* is, *Dying thou ſhalt die*, includes in it all the Harbingers, Forerunners, and inſtrumental Cauſes of Death. The Sentence does not ſeem to intend, that even the Body of *Adam* ſhould, immediately upon his Tranſgreſſion, fall under the actual Power of Death, but that he ſhould immediately become ſubject unto Death, and after having paſſed a Life in this World, for a certain Number of Years, attended with the Warnings, and Beginnings of Death, in Sickneſs, and Pains, and various Accidents, and Calamities, he ſhould at length die. Though none of theſe are expreſſed in the firſt Threatning, yet,

they

they are afterward, in the pronouncing of the Sentence upon the guilty Creature; which, by the Way ſhews us that much more is included in the Threatning than is expreſſed. For thus we read, Gen. iii. 17, 18, 19. *Curſed is the Ground, for thy Sake, in Sorrow ſhalt thou eat of it, all the Days of thy Life; Thorns, alſo, and Thiſtles, ſhall it bring forth to thee, and thou ſhalt eat the Herb of the Field; in the Sweat of thy Face ſhalt thou eat Bread, till thou return unto the Ground; for out of it waſt thou taken; for Duſt thou art, and unto Duſt ſhalt thou return.* It all plainly ſpeaks his Continuance in Life, for ſome certain Period, but in ſuch a Condition as evidenceth, that a Puniſhment ſitteth heavy upon him. The *Curſe upon the Ground*, the *Thorns, and Thiſtles*, it *ſhould bring forth unto him*, include the many Calamities his Life ſhould be ſubject to, in his Buſineſs, and Employment; his *eating of Bread in the Sweat of his Face*, indicates the toilſome Labour, and Pains, and Weakneſſes, that ſhould attend him; until, at Length, he ſhould return unto the Ground, from whence he was taken. And accordingly, we find, in the ſacred Hiſtory, that *Adam* lived, after this terrible Sentence was paſſed upon him Nine Hundred and Thirty Years, and then died. This has been the general Condition of Mankind, ever ſince, to live a longer, or ſhorter Time, here upon Earth, and more, or leſs, attended with the Harbingers, and Forerunners, of Death, in the many painful, and languiſhing, Diſeaſes, or Accidents, they are ſubject to, till, anon, their Breath goeth forth, and they return to their Earth. And, doubtleſs, thoſe many Pains, and Diſeaſes, that weaken, and torment, the humane Nature, are to be accounted a Part of the Puniſhment of Sin, and included in the firſt Threatning, as well as Death itſelf. And however a ſurly Temper may refuſe to own, that there is any Evil in them, yet the dolorous Senſations of Mankind,

under

under the Exercise of them, affords us a full Conviction that they are Evil; and we are sure that they are not Moral, and therefore are Penal Evils.

2. Now our Salvation is comprehensive of a Deliverance from all of this Unhappiness, and Misery, both the Beginnings, and the Consummation of the Death of our Bodies. Nor can we be said to be saved from the Punishment which Sin has brought upon us, if we are left wholly under the Power of these. For while the Creature groaneth to be delivered from the Bondage of Corruption, and we our selves groan within our selves, because of the sad Effects of the Curse, which we painfully experience in every Stage, and Condition, of Life, how are we saved? What a mighty Favour should we esteem it, if we might be totally freed from all the Perplexities, Embarrassments, Difficulties, and Uneasinesses, which we meet withal, in the various Businesses we are concerned in; and from all the painful, and grievous Maladies, and Disorders, our Bodies are liable unto, while we are in this World? But an absolute Freedom, from these miserable Circumstances, would no ways be futable to our present State of Probation; and therefore, for the Exercise of our Virtue, and the Proof of our Submission to the divine Government, they are allotted to us, as Part of our present Portion, from which we can plead no total Exemption. However, thus far our Salvation includeth, at present, a Deliverance from them, that the Curse of them shall be taken away, and they shall be made sanctified Mercies to us; so that they shall never befall us, but *if Need be*, (1 Pet. i. 6.) they shall be ordered for us in Measure, and proportioned to our Strength, that we may *be able to bear them*, 1 Cor. x. 13. and they shall all be made *to work together for our Good*, Rom. viii. 28. Till, anon, we shall wholly get out of the Reach of them, and never more meet with any

Thing

Thing to vex, or grieve us. Thus the Grace of the Goſpel Diſpenſation comes in, and ſanctifies all our Sufferings to us, and converteth, thoſe Things which were originally Penal Evils, into real Bleſſings to us, not only by ſupporting of us under them, but by rewarding of us for them; which *Adam*'s Covenant, or the firſt Tranſactions of God with Man, would no Ways admit of. Thoſe, indeed, that are truly under a Diſpenſation of Grace, are in themſelves conſidered, chargeable with Sin enough to vindicate the Juſtice, and Goodneſs, of God, in all the Sufferings they undergo; ſo that they are not Sufferings inflicted upon ſuch as deſerve no Puniſhment: But as for thoſe that remain utter Strangers to the Covenant of Promiſe, and are, as yet, under *Adam*'s Covenant, every Suffering they undergo is a proper Puniſhment upon them.

And though the original Sentence of Death is not ſo reverſed, as that good Men are excuſed from the Trouble of dying, for there is no Diſcharge in this War, but *if Chriſt be in you, the Body is dead becauſe of Sin*; Rom. viii. 10. yet our Salvation carries in it ſuch a Deliverance from the Power of Death, as that we ſhall not be always held under its Bonds, but we ſhall have our dead Bodies raiſed out of their Graves, to a more glorious Life, without being ſubject to any more Death. Therefore our *Saviour* hath aſſured us, John v. 29. *They that have done Good ſhall come forth*, (namely out of their Graves) *to the Reſurrection of Life*. There will, indeed, be a Reſurrection of the Wicked, as well as of the Good, but to very different Ends, and Purpoſes; for the dead Bodies of the Wicked will be raiſed, that they may receive the Reward of the evil Deeds done in the Body, even the juſt Puniſhment which they have deſerved; and therefore our Lord ſaid, *They that have done Evil ſhall come forth to the Reſurrection of Damnation*: Whereas the dead Bodies

of

of holy, and good Men ſhall be raiſed, to receive the Reward of all their Services in a glorious, and bleſſed Immortality. Thus, in our Salvation, Death ſhall be ſwallowed up in Victory.

2. The Sinner's Salvation conſiſteth in a Deliverance from all that Death which the Soul is ſubject to, as the Puniſhment of Sin.

Here,

1. There is a Death which the Soul, or Spirit of Man is ſubject to, as the Puniſhment of Sin.

The Soul, or Spirit, which I have before ſhewed there is in Man, is, not only an eſſential, but, the more noble, and excellent, Part of our Nature. 'Tis this, in us, that thinketh; that is the ſelf-moving Principle, which determines all our Motions, and Actions; that formeth a Judgment of the Agreement, or Diſagreement, of our Actions with the Will, and Law, of our Maker, the perfect Rule of our Conduct; and it is this that is intirely free, and voluntary, in its Actings, and is ſubject to no Compulſions; and therefore it is this Soul which rendereth us Subjects capable of Religion, and of Rewards, and Puniſhments; and of Conſequence, whenever Sin is chargeable upon us, we may be ſure the Charge lieth at the Door of this Soul. The Body, and all the Concernments of it, can only be made Uſe of as Means to entice us into Sin; yea *Satan* himſelf, that ſubtle and foul Spirit, can go no farther than to become a Tempter to that which is Evil, and accordingly he weareth the Name of, *the Tempter*, Matth. iv. 3. 'tis the Soul that muſt firſt hearken to, and comply with, the Temptation, muſt determine in Favour of the Evil ſhe is tempted to, and put us into Motion for the doing of it, before any Sin can be committed by us: And 'tis this Soul, in its primitive State of Purity, that muſt firſt ſuffer itſelf to be biaſſed, and prejudiced, with a falſe View of Things, before it could poſſibly give ſuch a wrong

wrong Determination, as to fall into any Sin. So that the Soul is every way the chief Agent in finning. And to this agreeth the Scripture Account of the Rife of Sin; where we read of the Sinners of the old World, *Gen.* vi. 5. that *every Imagination of the Thoughts of their Heart were evil continually*; and of the vile Perfon, *Ifa.* xxxii. 6. that *his Heart will work Iniquity*; and that *Hof.* iv. 8. *they fet their Heart on their Iniquity*; and our Saviour obferveth, *Matth.* xv. 19. *out of the Heart proceedeth evil Thoughts, Murders, Adulteries, Fornications, Thefts, Falfe Witneſs, Blaſphemies*; and the Prophet *Jeremiah* adviſeth, *Jer.* iv. 14. to *waſh the Heart from Wickedneſs*: in all which Places, (and many more,) by the Heart, the Soul is evidently meant, and that as the chief Agent in all Sin.

From hence therefore we may fairly conclude, that the Soul, which is the chief Agent in finning, muſt ſuffer a Puniſhment, proportionable to it's Deſerts, and ſuitable to it's Nature. Though there is no expreſs Notice taken of the Soul, in the original Sentence denounced againſt *Adam*, in the Day of his Apoſtacy, yet it muſt be remembered that the Sentence was pronounced upon the *Man*, or the *humane Nature*, *Thou ſhalt ſurely die*; and till it be made to appear that the Soul, or Spirit, is no Part of the human Nature, that it is not the moſt diſtinguiſhing Part of the Man, nor the moſt active, and deeply guilty, in every Violation of the Divine Law, we may well conclude, that the Sentence, which was paſſed upon the Sinner, was levelled againſt his Soul, as well as againſt his Body. Nor can I ſee how either the Wiſdom, or the Juſtice of God, can be reconciled to the inflicting a heavy Puniſhment upon the Body of finning Man, and the Soul, the principal Actor, be ſuffered to go away free.

But to this Conſideration, let us add, the fuller Diſcoveries of the Divine Mind, relating to this firſt

Sentence, in the ſubſequent Revelation it has pleaſed God to favour the World withal, and this Matter will appear in a clearer, and ſtronger Light. I am ſure, there can be no Abſurdity, or Inconſiſtency with Reaſon, in our looking upon all the after Accounts, which the great Law-giver maketh known to us, of his puniſhing of Sinners, but as ſo many Explanations of what is truly included in the original Sentence; (provided, there be nothing brought into the Account that is flatly contradictory, or plainly unreconcilable, to that Sentence;) Becauſe the infinite underſtanding of God comprehendeth at one entire View all that he meant as a Puniſhment of Sin, and admits of no future Diſcoveries of any new Puniſhment, as Men do; though he maketh new Diſcoveries or Revelations thereof to us. By this fair ſtating of things we may evidently ſee, that Death was originally intended as a Puniſhment upon the Soul, as well as upon the Body: and I need only to take Notice of a very few, of the many Texts of ſacred Scripture, which ſpeak this too plainly to be denied. Thus, in the Prophet *Ezekiel* we have the great God ſaying, *Ezek.* xviii. 4. *All Souls are mine; as the Soul of the Father, ſo alſo the Soul of the Son, is mine, the Soul that ſinneth it ſhall die.* Now, let it be granted, that the Soul here is to be underſtood perſonally, yet how unreaſonable is it to ſuppoſe, that the Soul, which is the grand Characteriſtick of the Perſon, and is expreſly mentioned, ſhould be exempted from the Penalty ſpoken of, and be ſubject to no Death. Again, the Apoſtle James obſerves, *Jam.* v. 20. *He, that ſhall convert a Sinner from the Error of his Ways, ſhall ſave a Soul from Death.* Let this, alſo be underſtood perſonally, yet not only is the Soul a conſtituent Part of the human Perſon, but 'tis the Soul that is the ſpecial Subject of Converſion, and it evidently is that which is converted that is ſaved from Death. Once more, Our bleſſed Saviour adviſeth

adviſeth us, *Matth.* x. 28. to *fear him who is able to deſtroy both Soul, and Body, in Hell.* Here is a Puniſhment ſpoken of, as appropriate to the Soul, and diſtinct from the Puniſhment to be inflicted upon the Body, in as plain Terms as Words can make it. Let none think to evade the Strength of this by ſaying, what God can do is one thing, and what He will do is another; for unleſs this Paſſage plainly, and fully, intend, that God deſigned to puniſh the Soul, as well as the Body, in Hell, there would be no Force in the Advice. So that this Puniſhment upon the Soul, ſpoken of in the ſubſequent Diſcoveries of the Divine Mind, to me, ſhews us what was intended by the original Sentence of Death: for all the after Threatnings of God, upon guilty Sinners, are built upon that, as all his after Promiſes are founded upon the firſt Promiſe of Salvation, or Deliverance. But here it muſt be obſerved, that the Soul is not a Subject capable of ſuch a Death, as our Bodies are liable to; nor is there any Neceſſity at all, from the Threatning of Death, that it ſhould. 'Tis enough that the Soul be ſubject to ſuch a Death, as it's Nature renders it capable of, even as the Body undergoeth ſuch a Death, as it's Nature capacitateth it for: this is all that can, in Reaſon, be ſuppoſed to be meant by Death. If, by Death, be intended only a Separation of Soul and Body, or the diſſolving their cloſe Union; ſuch a Death the Soul may properly enough be ſaid to ſuffer, as well as the Body, whenever that Separation between them ſhall be made. But if, by Death be intended the Loſs of Life, and Action, and the Separation of the ſeveral Parts, or Particles, of the Body, and it's turning into Duſt, and Rottenneſs, as the Conſequent of the Soul's Separation from it; ſuch a Death the Soul is not capable of, becauſe it is not conſtituted of corporeal Parts, as the Body is, but is a ſpiritual Subſtance, whoſe Life is in itſelf, by the original Grant of it's

Maker, and is no ways dependent upon it's Union to the Body. Therefore we are not to expect any ſuch Death, as the Body is ſubject to, to befal the Soul, as the Puniſhment of Sin upon it: for the Soul, or Spirit, in Man, is, in this Senſe, an immortal Being, and exiſteth for ever. Whether the Inferences our Reaſon may draw from the Nature of Spirit, ſo far as it falleth under our Conception, are fully concluſive, in Proof of the Soul's Immortality, or no, yet this we are ſure of, that the ſacred Pages every where treateth it as an immortal, never-dying Being; and therefore threatneth the wicked with an *Eternal Puniſhment*, and encourages the vertuous with the Promiſe of *Eternal Life*.

That Death therefore which the Soul is capable of conſiſteth, in the unhappy, and miſerable Condition which it will be thrown into, as the juſt Puniſhment of it's having trampled upon the Divine Authority; ſomething of which the Sinner often experiences while he is yet in the Body, in the inward Reproaches, Horror, and Anguiſh, of his own Mind: and the compleating of which Miſery will take Place upon the Soul of the Sinner, when it paſſeth out of the Body, into the unſeen World, in the inexpreſſible, and endleſs Torments which will then attend it: for this the whole Tenor of the Divine Writings, eſpecially the clearer Revelations of the New-Teſtament, gives us to underſtand, will be the Puniſhment of finally impenitent Sinners.

Thus what Fear, what Terror, what Anguiſh of Soul, ſeiſed upon *Cain?* the firſt open Tranſgreſſor; of *Adam*'s Deſcendents, when, in the Horror of his Spirit, he cried out; *Gen.* iv. 13, 14. *My Puniſhment is greater than I can bear; behold, thou haſt driven me out this Day from the Face of the Earth, and from thy Face ſhall I be hid; and I ſhall be a Fugitive, and a Vagabond in the Earth; and it ſhall come to paſs, that every one that findeth me, ſhall ſlay me.* Yea, what

what Anguiſh of Mind was *Adam* himſelf thrown into, immediately upon his Sin? *when he was afraid, and hid himſelf. Gen.* iii. 10. In which, by the Way, you may obſerve, that his Soul, or Spirit, ſuffered Puniſhment. Was it not the Horror of his Conſcience, in that he had ſinned, in betraying innocent Blood, that put *Judas* upon *hanging himſelf? Matth.* xxvii. 5. Was it not the Anguiſh of his Mind, that ſet *Felix*, the *Roman* Governour a *trembling*, before his Priſoner, when *he reaſoned of Righteouſneſs, Temperance and Judgment to come? Act.* xxiv. 25. Are we not told? *Iſa.* lvii. 20, 21. *The Wicked are like the troubled Sea, when it cannot reſt; there is no Peace, ſaith my God, to the wicked.* And do we not read, *Prov.* xviii. 14. *of a wounded Spirit, which who can bear.* What a dreadful Account does the Scripture give us of the Puniſhment of Sinners in the future World! We are told, *Pſ.* ix. 17. The *Wicked ſhall be turned into Hell*, they *ſhall go away into everlaſting Puniſhment*: *Matth.* xxv. 46. They *ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting Deſtruction*: 2 *Theſ.* i. 9. and that, in Hell, they are *tormented in Flames. Luk.* xvi. 24. So even ſinning Angels are *reſerved in everlaſting Chains, under Darkneſs, unto the Judgment of the great Day. Jud.* ver. 6.

This future Puniſhment will fall heavy upon the Soul of the guilty Sinner, in the other World; for however the Divine Patience may bear with Sinners now, then will be the proper, determined, Seaſon of Retribution; and God, our Judge, is Omniſcient, and perfectly well acquainted with all the Sinner's Tranſgreſſions of his Holy Law, tho' their Sins may have been committed ever ſo ſecretly, and hidden from the View of Men. *Jer.* xxix. 23. *I know, and am a Witneſs, ſaith the Lord.* There is not a vain *Thought in our Hearts*, no more than an idle *Word under our Tongues*, but *thou, O Lord knowſt*

them altogether. Pſ. cxxxix. 2, 4. The Lord is alſo an Omnipotent God, who has all Power in his own Hands, and can inflict the threatened Puniſhment, upon the greateſt Sinner ; He hath ſaid, *Deut.* xxxii. 39. *See now, that I, even I, am He, and there is no God with me, I kill, and I make alive, I wound, and I heal, neither is there any that can deliver out of my Hand.* The unbiaſed Juſtice of God alſo ſtands armed with it's Terrors, to purſue the guilty Sinner, and bring all that Vengeance upon him, which is the juſt Deſert of his Crimes ; for, *Rom.* iii. 4. *God is righteous, who taketh Vengeance.* So that there is no poſſible Way of the Sinner's eſcaping, unleſs, upon proper Conſiderations, the infinite Mercy of God interpoſe, to pardon, and ſave him. This Puniſhment, in whatſoever it may particularly conſiſt, is intirely deſtructive of the Comfort, and Well-being of the Soul ; tho' it doth not ſtrip her of her Exiſtence, becauſe of her immortal Nature, yet it neceſſarily filleth her with exquiſite Uneaſineſs, Pain, and Anguiſh.

2. Then, therefore, is the Soul ſaved, when it is fully delivered from all of this Puniſhment, which is the juſt Deſert of it's Crimes, and it neither feeleth, nor feareth, the Effects of it's own Guilt, which are not ſuffered to take Place upon it. For the very Fears of Puniſhment are no ſmall Part of the Preſent Puniſhment of the Wicked, whoſe Diſtreſs, and Perplexity, will be in Proportion to the Degree of their Fears ; and therefore the Salvation of the Sinner neceſſarily includes in it, not only a Deliverance from future Miſery, but from the leaſt Degree of the Fears of any. 'Tis mentioned, therefore, as one of the happy Effects of an Horn of Salvation being raiſed up for us, *Luk.* i. 74. *that we ſhould ſerve him without Fear.* The devout Soul experiences ſomething of this, while in this World, in the Joy of Faith, tho' not in Perfection,

nor

nor always ; but, in the future World, he will know no Wrath, nor fear any. The great Article of our Salvation, accompliſhed for us by the almighty Redeemer, is that, *Rom.* v. 9. *we ſhall be ſaved from Wrath, through Him* ; for He is *Jeſus that delivereth us from the Wrath to come.* 1 *Theſ.* i. 10. By Him, we are ſaved from all the diſmal Effects of the tremendous Wrath of a provoked, and almighty God, and that, not only from the lighter Showers thereof, in temporal Judgments, but, from the moſt dreadful, and amazing Flood of Vengeance, rolling, in all it's Fury, upon the condemned Sinner, in the Second Death. This is to be ſaved, when the Soul is not only ſecured, from the Sting of the firſt Death, that it ſhall have nothing to fear, after it has taken leave of the Body, but, from the leaſt Degree of that inſupportable Puniſhment, which is called the ſecond Death, and which more immediately ſeiſeth upon the Soul itſelf, and is everlaſting, for ever falling upon it. *Bleſſed, and holy, is he that hath Part in the firſt Reſurrection, on ſuch the ſecond Death hath no Power. Rev.* xx. 6. And there is not a ſinful Man, Woman, or Child, among us, but what ſtands in Need of Deliverance from this Puniſhment. This ſeemeth to be what the *Jaylor* was peculiarly, and in Earneſt, concerned about, when he cryed out, *Sirs, what muſt I do to be ſaved?* viz. what he ſhould do to be delivered from the Guilt of his Sins, from the Wrath of God, and from the Damnation of Hell. Conſider what you have heard, and the Lord give you underſtanding in all Things.

SERMON IV.

ACTS XVI. 30.

And ſaid, Sirs, What muſt I do to be ſaved?

IN the Morning, I ſhewed that the Salvation of the Goſpel conſiſteth in a Deliverance from all that Puniſhment which Sinners are ſubject to, as included in the Sentence of Death, both upon the Bodies, and Souls of Men. And ſo having ſhewed our Salvation containeth a Deliverance from all Evil, Moral, and Penal, I proceed now to the ſecond Head, viz.

II. For the Sinner to be ſaved is, for him to be brought to the full Poſſeſſion of all that poſitive Good, which he is deſtitute of, and wanteth. The Soul, conſidered as vicious and ſinful, is utterly deſtitute of all that Good which is commenſurate to it's Nature, and Condition; ſo that it neither has any within itſelf, but what is mixed, and adulterated, it's Power of diſcerning is greatly obſcured, and it's Power of acting, ſuitably to it's rational Nature, is weakened, and interrupted, by the Impediments of diverſe Luſts, and Paſſions; nor has it any fair Title to any true Good out of itſelf. It is it's Unhappineſs, that, in the midſt of all the Evils it is liable unto, there is none to ſpeak comfortably unto

unto it ; nor any ſure Foundation, in the whole Circle of created Nature, for it's Satisfaction, and Joy. If it looketh within itſelf, it ſeeth that Sin hath deprived it of that Innocency, and Integrity, which was it's original Beauty, and Delight ; if it ſurveyeth, far and wide, around itſelf, it ſeeth Nothing but a wretched Forfeiture of all that Good, which it was primarily deſigned, and capacitated for. And though, through the Weakneſs, and Stupefaction, which Sin has brought upon it, the Soul may, for the Preſent, be very inſenſible of it's own deſtitute Condition, and be ready to cry out, in a boaſting Manner, with the *Laodicean* Church, *Rev.* iii. 17. *I am rich, and encreaſed with Goods, and have Need of Nothing* ; I can ſee clearly, chooſe wiſely, perform my Part fully, and rejoice in my own Strength, and the mighty Advantages of it ; yet, muſt it be ſaid to her, as in the following Words, *Thou art wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked* ; neither able to ſee clearly it's Intereſt, and the Way to it, nor having any thing, within itſelf, to afford it Peace and Comfort, nor able to defend itſelf from impending Dangers. In this State of Poverty, Nakedneſs, Want, and Blindneſs, the Soul of the Sinner is miſerably periſhing ; and therefore it is an eſſential Part of his Salvation, to have it's preſent, and future Wants ſupplied, with a full Title to, and ſeaſonable Poſſeſſion of, all that Good which it's Nature, and Condition, do in any Manner require.

And thus ;

1. The Soul is ſaved, by having it's preſent ſpiritual Wants ſupplied. That is to ſay, to have all the Diſorders of the Soul rectified, it's Diſeaſes healed, it's ghaſtly Wounds cured, it's Deſires, and Averſions, regulated, and ſatisfied ; herein conſiſteth very much of our Salvation for the preſent, becauſe this is an accommodating the Nature, and Condition,

tion, of the Soul, with what ſhe needeth. For, ſince the Fall, the Soul is naturally in a very languiſhing Condition, an univerſal ill Habit hath ſeiſed upon all the Powers of it; as the *Prophet Iſa.* i. 5, 6. elegantly deciphereth it, *The whole Head is ſick*; &c. The Underſtanding, that is ſickly, and out of Order, unable to perform it's Office, and ſee clearly, by Reaſon of the Darkneſs which is upon the Mind; the Will, the commanding, and active Power in us, is faint, weak, and without Strength, becauſe of the Bands that are upon it, from a perverſe Bias; the Affections are unſound, diſtorted, irregular, being wrongly placed, and impetuous in their Actings; the Conſcience is covered with Wounds, Bruiſes, and putrifying Sores, filled with Pain, and Uneaſineſs, and often nummed and ſtupified: And what can be a more deſtitute, and deplorable Condition, than this is, to a ſpiritual and intellectual Being? Which was, at firſt, formed pure, and upright, which ſaw clearly, choſe wiſely, and affected regularly, and delighted itſelf in all its Actions; which was made but little lower than the Angels, as in the Strength, and Vigour, ſo alſo in the Rectitude, and Harmony, of all its Powers. To fall from the greateſt Fulneſs of Rectitude, and Happineſs, our Nature was capable of, into the Want of it all, is an amazing Fall indeed!

Hence this neceſſarily goes into our Salvation, to have this ſpiritual, and immortal Being, in us, recovered from all thoſe ſad, and diſmal, Effects of our Apoſtacy from God; to have a new Nature given to us, diſpoſing of us to act up to the original Dignity, and Deſign, of our Make, in a conſtant Care to do the Things, that are fitting and right; that are pleaſing, and acceptable to God, and are vertuous, and commendable, among Men. This is called *Eph.* ii. 1. a being *quickened*, or, being made ſpiritually alive: And, 2 *Pet.* i. 4. a *partaking of the divine*

divine Nature ; and *a new Creature.* 2 *Cor.* v. 17. Not that there is any *Phyſical* Change paſſed upon the Soul, but there is a *moral* one wrought in it, and upon all the Powers of it, by which ſomething of the divine Nature, or Likeneſs, is put upon it, in the Temper, and Diſpoſition of it, whereby the Soul is enabled to live a new Life, in the regulating of its Actings ; and thus, *Old Things are done away, and behold, all Things are become new.* For, by this Means, the Underſtanding is enlightned to a true Diſcernment of ſpiritual, and divine Things ; the Will is renewed to a Capacity, and Strength, whereby it is enabled to chuſe the Good, and refuſe the Evil ; the Affections are duly placed, and exerciſed, are brought into Subjection, under the Government of right Reaſon ; and the Conſcience is purged from dead Works, to ſerve the living, and true God ; and thus the whole Soul becometh *the Workmanſhip of God, created, in Chriſt Jeſus, unto good Works.* Eph. ii. 10. This bleſſed Work is wrought in us, by the converting Grace of God, which reneweth, and changeth the Heart of the Sinner, and maketh it to be a gracious, and an holy Soul. 'Till this Work of Grace be accompliſhed in the Soul, it remaineth in a State of Corruption, and Depravity, of Subjection, and Slavery, under the tyrannizing Power and Dominion, of Sin, and Satan ; and therefore cannot poſſibly be ſaved, whilſt the Chains upon it are ſo heavy, and the Bondage ſo cruel. A new Nature is an eſſential Part of our Salvation. We are not, we cannot be, ſaved, until we are reſcued from our Slavery, and are aſſerted into the Liberties of the Sons of God. Hence 'tis that the Salvation of the Goſpel carries in it, *Acts* xxvi. 18. a being *turned from Darkneſs, to Light, and from the Power of Satan, unto God* ; a *Sanctification of the Spirit,* 2 Theſſ. ii. 13 ; a coming *to the Knowledge,* and ſo to the Practice, *of the Truth.* 1 *Tim.* ii. 4. And hence

hence it is, that the Converſion of the *Gentiles*, is called their *Salvation*, *Through their Fall* (that is, of the *Jews*) *Salvation is come unto the Gentiles.* Rom. xi. 11. The Rejection of the *Jews* made Way for the Calling in, and Converſion, of the *Gentile* World, and this their effectual Calling, and Converſion, is their Salvation. Thus alſo, the Converſion of the *Jews*, in the latter Days, is ſtiled their Salvation ; Ver. 26. *And ſo all Iſrael ſhall be ſaved* ; and how their Salvation ſhall be brought about, the *Apoſtle* informs us, by quoting a Prophecy of *Iſaiah*'s, *As it is written, there ſhall come out of Sion, the Deliverer, and ſhall turn away Ungodlineſs from Jacob.* That is, the *Jews* ſhall be converted to the Faith, and Laws, of the great *Meſſiah*, whom, at preſent, they diſown and reject ; and then they ſhall be ſaved.

Beſides, the Sinner has the Peace of his own Mind broken, and his Conſcience moſt ſadly wounded, by Sin, that he cannot take a Survey of himſelf, without being inwardly diſpleaſed with himſelf, and his own Actions, and fearfully apprehenſive of the Anger of Almighty God, who, he is ſenſible, is juſtly offended with him : And therefore our Salvation comprehendeth in it, the Reſtoration of Peace to the Man's own Mind, from a well grounded Hope of the Mercy of God, through the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, and the pleaſing Proſpect of the renewing Influences of the Spirit, and Grace of God, in the Soul ; which affordeth the Rejoicing of the Conſcience, in its Teſtimony for us, that in Simplicity, and godly Sincerity, not by fleſhly Wiſdom, but by the Grace of God, we have our Converſation in the World. This is a bleſſed Peace with God, and with a Man's Self. 'Tis called, Phil. iv. 7. *The Peace of God, which paſſeth all Underſtanding* ; and the *Mind's being kept in perfect Peace.* Iſa. xxvi. 3. It is the bleſſed Legacy which our compaſſionate Lord hath

hath left to all his Diſciples, *Joh.* xiv. 27. *And the Fruit of Righteouſneſs, which is ſown in Peace*; Jam. iii. 18. And truly, great Peace have they that love the Law of God, and nothing ſhall offend them. This inward Tranquility, Peace, and Calm of Mind, is founded in the Merits of Chriſt, reſulteth from the great and precious Promiſes of God, and ariſeth, not from heated Imagination, and ſudden Impulſes, but, from a Man's View of himſelf, in Compare with the Characters given, in the ſacred Oracles, of the renewed Soul, whereby the Holy Spirit witneſſeth with his Spirit, that he is a Child of God, and an Heir of Salvation. Though every true Chriſtian is not, always, in the actual Enjoyment of this inward Peace, and Joy, in Believing, but only while under the lively Exerciſe of his Graces, yet he has a Right to it, and at Times, as it pleaſeth God, taſteth the Sweet of it, and will finally have his Salvation compleated, by entring into the Joy of his Lord.

2. The Soul is ſaved, by having its future, and eternal, Wants ſupplied. For, however the Body is but temporary in its Duration, and, we know, will, ſooner, or later, return to its original Duſt, yet the Soul is of an immortal Nature, and ſhall exiſt, when ſeparated from the Body, and continue to exiſt throughout an endleſs Eternity: Which gave Occaſion to that ſolemn Caution of our Saviour, Luke xii. 4. *I ſay unto you, my Friends, be not afraid of them that kill the Body, and after that, have no more that they can do*; they cannot kill the Soul. And the God, who formed the Spirit of Man within him, has given us ſufficient Aſſurance, that he will not ſo deſtroy the Soul, as to put an utter End to its Exiſtence, but will deal with it, as with a Creature of endleſs Continuance, by beſtowing everlaſting Rewards, and Puniſhments, upon it: Which is a plain Conviction to us, that the Soul muſt have an everlaſting

everlaſting Duration, that it may be a Subject capable of everlaſting Rewards, or Puniſhments.

Hence, in that future, and eternal, State, which the Soul is paſſing into, it will ſtand in Need of the endleſs Poſſeſſion of a Good, that is every Way ſutable, and agreeable, in its Nature, and Duration, to ſuch a ſpiritual, intellectual, and immortal Being, to compleat its Happineſs, in the ſatisfactory Enjoyment of it. For however its preſent Wants may be ſupplied, with all that its Condition requireth, yet, if in that future, and eternal, State, it is paſſing into, the Soul, ſhould be left naked, and deſtitute, of what would be neceſſary for its Comfort, and that throughout an endleſs Duration, it could not poſſibly avoid being truly, and forever, miſerable.

And becauſe God himſelf, is the only Fountain of all true Good, and Heaven, wherever it is, is the peculiar Seat of perfect Happineſs, therefore the Soul cannot poſſibly be happy, in the future World, nor have its Nature gratified, nor its Deſires anſwered, if it ſhould not be admitted to dwell in the ſpecial Preſence, and partake of the Expreſſions of the peculiar Favour, of that infinitely glorious, and happy, Being; but, inſtead thereof, muſt be forever baniſhed from the bliſsful Seat, and the delightful Tokens, of the Divine Loving-Kindneſs. And yet, this heavenly Glory, and Happineſs, the Soul has no Claim, or Title, to, in its preſent, natural, corrupt, State, as fallen, and ſinful: Becauſe all Sin is ſuch a Contrariety to the divine Nature, and Law, as forfeiteth the Favour of God, and the heavenly Inheritance. Therefore it is ſaid of Sinners, 1 Cor. vi. 10. *They ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God*; and we are aſſured, Heb. xii. 14. *Without Holineſs no Man ſhall ſee the Lord.* God, and Heaven, are too pure and holy, for an impure, unholy Soul, while it remaineth ſuch, ever to arrive at the Poſſeſſion of: The Diſagreement between their Natures,

Natures, would forever keep the guilty, filthy, impure Thing, at the greateſt Diſtance from God, and Heaven.

Hence, therefore, as this is the chief Good, which the Soul wanteth, to return to God as its Centre, ſo is it the very Top, and Perfection, of the Salvation of the Soul, finally to be brought into the more immediate Preſence and full Enjoyment of the ſupream Good, in the ſpecial Tokens of the diſtinguiſhing Favour, and Love, of the infinitely bleſſed God, in the heavenly World. Therefore our Salvation is called, Matth. vii. 21. an *entring into the Kingdom of Heaven*; and, a *ſeeing God*, Matth. v. 8. and a being *where Chriſt is*, Joh. xiv. 3. And you may obſerve, that the Apoſtle *Peter* mentions this as the Conſummation, and Perfection of our Salvation; 1 Pet. i. 9. *Receiving the End of your Faith, the Salvation of your Souls.* That is, *when you receive*, for ſo the Participle is often to be underſtood; when you receive *the End of your Faith*; their Faith was placed on God, and Chriſt, *whom having not ſeen*, (ſays he) *ye love, though now ye ſee him not, yet believing ye rejoice*;— now *the End*, or finiſhing, or conſummating, *of their Faith*, is the Enjoyment of the Object of it; then their Faith is finiſhed, attaineth its End, when it is turned into Viſion, and Fruition, in the Poſſeſſion of what their Faith was fixed upon; thus receiving the End of your Faith, you receive *the Salvation of your Souls*; the Salvation of your Souls will be perfected in this. This Salvation, this End of our Faith, we ſhall receive in Heaven, the ſpecial Seat of the bleſſed Reward, of which the Apoſtle had ſpoken, in the Beginning of the Chapter, ſaying, Ver. 3, 4, 5. *God hath begotten us to an Inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in Heaven for you; who are kept, by the Power of God, through Faith, unto Salvation.* There, in Heaven, our Faith will

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have an End, and there will be no farther Uſe, and Occaſion, for it; becauſe there, Viſion, and Fruition will ſucceed in the Room of it.

Farther, we are to obſerve, that in Order to the future Wants of the Soul being ſupplied, it muſt be every Way gratified, both from within itſelf, and from every Thing it converſeth with, and that in ſuch a Manner as to leave no Appetite unſatisfied, and ſo as to render it compleatly happy. For if there ſhould be any Thing wanting, within itſelf, either as to the perfect Harmony of its Powers, or the Capacity to take in what it thirſteth after; or, if there be any Thing wanting, in what it converſes with, to afford it true Delight, and Satisfaction, it would remain, ſo far at leaſt, in a State of Miſery, becauſe in a State of Craving, and Want.

Therefore, this is neceſſarily included in the Salvation of the Soul, that it be perfectly holy, without the leaſt Remainder of Corruption, or Taint of Sin, or ſo much as an unholy Thought entertained in the Heart. Hence we are told, 1 Joh. iii. 2. *It doth not yet appear what we ſhall be, but when he* (Chriſt) *ſhall appear we ſhall be like him*; being made conformable to the perfectly holy Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Our Powers ſhall alſo be enlarged to take in the Objects that are preſented to them, and our Knowledge of God, and Chriſt, and the ſtupendous Wonders of Creation, Providence, and Redemption, be as perfect as our finite Nature will admit of: Therefore the Apoſtle ſaith, 1 Cor. xiii. 12. *Now we ſee, through a Glaſs darkly, but then Face to Face; now we know in Part, but then we ſhall know even as we alſo are known.* Our Converſe will then be, not with weak, imperfect Creatures, of jarring Tempers, ſeparate Views, and Deſigns, and full of Jealouſies, and Suſpicions, but, with ſuch pure Spirits, as are wholly purged from all the Feculency, and Alloy, which here cleaveth to us; that perfectly harmonize

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in the ſame Temper, Views, and Deſigns, and therefore afford unſpeakable Pleaſure and Delight, to each other. Heb. xii. 22, 23. *We come to the innumerable Company of Angels, to the general Aſſembly of the Church of the Firſt-born, to the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect.* Our Employment will fill the Soul with the moſt delightful Entertainments, in the moſt devout and raiſed Contemplations, and the raviſhing and inceſſant Anthems of Praiſe, and Hallelujahs, to our Almighty Maker, and Redeemer. Rev. iv. 8. *They reſt not, Day, and Night, ſaying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.* And of Conſequence, our Enjoyments will be of all that Heart can wiſh for, by which every Appetite will be compleatly filled, and every Deſire abundantly gratified; and ſo the Soul will be rendered truly happy.

But, I muſt add, that whilſt the Soul is ſeparated from the Body, it cannot, we may ſuppoſe, but have ſome longing Deſire after a Union to that ſhe ſo long dwelt in, and had a Fondneſs for: And therefore her Salvation comprehendeth in it, the gratifying of this Deſire, by a Re-union of Soul, and Body; though not of ſo groſs a Body as was her Companion, and very much her Impediment, in this World, for *Fleſh, and Blood, cannot inherit the Kingdom of God*; but a Body raiſed, and purified, refined, and ſpiritualized, and rendered immortal; a proper Manſion for a pure Spirit, a fit Vehicle for her various ſublime Operations. Therefore the Apoſtle informs us, of the Reſurrection of our Bodies, and what Sort of Bodies they will be; 1 Cor. xv. 42, &c. *It is ſown* (ſaith he) *in Corruption, it is raiſed in Incorruption; it is ſown in Diſhonour, it is raiſed in Glory; it is ſown in Weakneſs, it is raiſed in Power; it is ſown a natural Body, it is raiſed a ſpiritual Body*: And he addeth, Ver. 53. *This Corruptible muſt put on Incorruption; and this Mortal muſt*

put on Immortality. And to compleat the Fulneſs of our Salvation, both in Soul, and Body, 'tis an *eternal Salvation*, Heb. v. 9. And our Saviour ſaith of the Reſurrection Bodies, Luk. xx. 36. *Neither can they die any more, for they are equal unto the Angels of God.* When thus the purified, and happy Spirit ſhall receive the raiſed Body, refined, and ſpiritualized, into an intimate Union with itſelf, never more to be ſeparated from it, then will it arrive at the Conſummation of its Salvation, and attain the End of its Faith; what its Faith aimed at, and what it will be forever perfected in.

This may ſuffice, to ſhew what it is to be ſaved; I ſhould now proceed to the *Second* General Head propoſed, that periſhing Sinners may be thus ſaved; but I ſhall conclude the preſent Diſcourſe, with a Reflection or two on what has been ſaid.

Use 1. With what Indignation, and Abhorrence, of Soul, ſhould we now take a View of our original Apoſtacy, that Fountain of Evil, in us? It is a ſad and moſt Heart-affecting, and Soul humbling, Proſpect, to behold, ſuch an amazing Ruin, as is brought upon what was, once, ſo beautiful, and glorious a Creature, as Man, by ſo vile, and baſe a Thing as Sin is. The Thought hereof is enough, one would think, to raiſe in our Minds, the utmoſt Abhorrence, and unconquerable Averſion, to ſo great an Enemy to our Nature, and Happineſs; which has, not only rendered us guilty, and depraved, but has expoſed us to the moſt ſevere Puniſhment, in the Loſs of all that is good, and delightful to us, and the ſuffering of all that is painful, and tormenting. While Man continued an innocent Creature, there was no foreign, nor domeſtick, Puniſhment, to diſtreſs, and torment him; he felt none, and he feared none. But the firſt Sin has driven the human Nature from its original Manſions of Light, and Joy, and caſt it down from Heaven, into the loweſt Abyſs, into outer Darkneſs.

Darkneſs. It has deprived us of our God, the Perfection of Being, and of all Good ; has thruſt us out of his bliſsful Preſence, and Favour, and doom'd us to an everlaſting Deſtruction, in Hell, there to ſuffer the Vengeance of eternal Fire ; that unleſs ſome kind, and almighty Arm, appear to help us, and reſcue us from the devouring Jaws of the burning Vault, and make up the Breach between God, and us, we are undone, and periſh for ever. We are too apt to have our Reſentments kindled againſt thoſe, and to hold them for our Enemies, and treat them accordingly, who, we ſee, at any Time, deſignedly, attempt to hurt us, in our Bodies, or any of our bodily Intereſts ; (though in Reality, nothing can hurt us but what is detrimental to our Souls, in their Purity and Happineſs) and ſhould we not then look upon Sin, with the utmoſt Abhorrence, and Deteſtation, as truly our grand Enemy, the Bane of our Comfort, the Deſtroyer of our Purity, Peace, and Happineſs, which at firſt, and ever ſince, has deſignedly ſought our utter Deſtruction, in Soul and Body, forever ? Should we not look upon our original Guilt, and Pollution, as the Origin of all the Evils we ſuffer, of Pains and Sickneſſes, of Loſſes, and Bereavements, of Plagues, and Famines, and Wars ? 'Tis this that hath ſold us into Slavery to vile, and ſordid Luſts ; that has bound our Hands, and rendered us unable, without ſpecial Divine Aſſiſtance, to perform any acceptable Service to our God, or profitable to ourſelves ; 'tis this that has forfeited Heaven, and all the Glories, of the upper World, which are not to be regained for us, but at the Expence of the Blood of the incarnate Son of God ; and it is this that has expoſed us to Fear, and Horror, and the Damnation of Hell, which none but the bleſſed Jeſus can ſave us from. And ſhall we, then, maintain any Friendſhip with it, conſult its Intereſt, and ſeek the gratifying of it ! *Your In-*

iquities have ſeparated between you, and your God, Iſa. lix. 2. And *your Sins have withholden good Things from you*, Jer. v. 25. Should we not, then, abhor, and loath it, and our ſelves for it; and contract an implacable Hatred, and Averſion to Sin, as that which we cannot poſſibly be in Friendſhip with, upon lower Terms, than the Loſs of all that is truly dear to us, and the ſuffering of all that will make us compleatly, and forever miſerable? O how earneſt ſhould we be in coming to an immediate, and fixed Reſolution, with ourſelves, never more to have any Thing to do with the unfruitful Works of Darkneſs, of which we have ſo much Reaſon to be aſhamed, and the End whereof is Death. Had it not been for the Apoſtacy of the human Nature, we ſhould have ſhone bright, with the radiant Likeneſs of the Deity upon us, and have been admitted to near, and intimate Communion with our Maker, and Converſe with Angels; the Earth would have been an univerſal Paradiſe to us, and we had known nothing of the Pains, and Terrors of dying; but, Oh! how is the Gold become dim, and the fine Gold changed! and what was ruddier than the Rubies, and more poliſhed than the Saphire, is become blacker than a Coal, and embraceth the Dunghill. So has Sin turned a noble Creature into a Devil, covered him with Blackneſs, and Deformity, rendered him a Shame to himſelf, and the Contempt, and Sport, of every foul Spirit; converted a Paradiſe into a Wilderneſs, made Death neceſſary, and unavoidable, and the Hell, that followeth cloſe at the Heels thereof, his deſerved, and dreadful Portion. And with what Diſtreſs, and Anguiſh, of Soul, ſhould we cry out, upon the View hereof, with the Apoſtle, Rom. vii. 24. *O wretched Man that I am! Who ſhall deliver me from the Body of this Death?*

2. Hence, Brethren, ye ſee the Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath undertaken to redeem, and

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ſave us, from all of this Evil, both Moral, and Penal. The Apoſtle illuſtrates, and commends to us, the Love and Grace of God, and Chriſt, in his appearing on our Behalf to ſave us from Sin, and Puniſhment, in the fifth Chapter to the *Romans*; *When we were without Strength* (ſays he) *Chriſt died for the Ungodly*; *God commendeth his Love to us, in that, while we were yet Sinners, Chriſt died for us*; *that we might be ſaved from Wrath through him*; *that we might be reconciled to God, by the Death of his Son*; *that by him, we might receive the Atonement*; *that by the Obedience of that one Man many might be made righteous*; *and the free Gift of God might come upon all Men unto Juſtification of Life*; *that Grace might reign, through Righteouſneſs, unto eternal Life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* And is it poſſible we can think of theſe Things, and not ſee that we owe all that we are, and have, and hope for, unto the bleſſed Jeſus!

View over thine own wretched Condition, by Nature, and Practice! See what thou art, and what thou deſerveſt! A guilty, defiled, unworthy, Hell-deſerving Creature! And how canſt thou hope to eſcape from all this Unhappineſs and Miſery? Can the Wiſdom of thine own Heart prudently contrive the Methods of thy Redemption? Or, will the Strength of thine own Arm be ſufficient, effectually to reſcue thee from the Powers of Darkneſs, the Arreſt of divine Juſtice, and the Puniſhment of the Damned? Or, haſt thou a full Price in thy Purſe, Merit enough of thine own, to buy off thy Guilt, and Puniſhment, and procure the divine Favour to thee? Alas! thou art empty, and deſtitute, wretched, and miſerable, poor, and blind, and naked; and there is nothing within the Compaſs of meerly created Nature, that is able to help thee. Be it known unto you, that by the Name of Jeſus Chriſt only, can you be made whole; *neither is there Salvation*

in any other ; for there is none other Name, under Heaven, given among Men, whereby we muſt be ſaved. Acts iv. 12.

Though thy Redemption, and Salvation, take their Riſe from the Good will of the *eternal Father*, yet it is Chriſt alone that has merited all for thee. And, Oh ! at how dear a Price has he purchaſed our Redemption from Sin, and Hell ! Not with corruptible Things, as Silver, and Gold, but with the Price of his own moſt precious Blood, which he hath given as a Ranſom for many. Thus *Chriſt hath redeemed us from the Curſe of the Law, being made a Curſe for us.* Gal. iii. 13.

And as he alone hath merited all for us, ſo doth he, of his Fulneſs, confer all upon us ; his Word to teach and inſtruct us ; his Spirit to convert, lead, and guide us ; his Grace to purify us, and make us meet for the Inheritance of the Saints in Light ; and his Heaven, and Glory, as our ſatisfying, and everlaſting Portion.

Oh, let the Thoughts hereof greatly endear the bleſſed Jeſus to thy Soul, as the moſt amiable Object, the chiefeſt among Ten Thouſands, and altogether lovely ; may it knit thy whole Heart unto the dear Redeemer, in the moſt ſincere Faith, and fervent Love, and fixed Reſolution to be his obedient Servant, and Follower forever.

3. Let us, then, proſecute the mortifying of Sin in us, by the moſt ſincere Humiliation, and unfeigned Repentance. Unleſs Sin be mortified, it will prove the Death, not only of the Body, but of the Soul alſo ; yea, there is a ſpiritual Death already preying upon the Soul, by Reaſon whereof, *we are dead in Treſpaſſes, and Sin*, Eph. ii. 1. Our great Work is to get Sin mortified in us, that we may be delivered from the Curſe of it, and be ourſelves reſtored to Life and Happineſs.

But, in Order to mortify Sin, 'tis not enough to lop

lop off ſome of its Branches; for ſo many Perſons may do, and very much eſcape the Corruption that is in the World, through Luſt; and yet be under the reigning Power of Sin over them; but we muſt ſtrike at the Root, the *Sin that dwelleth in us*, and endeavour to get this Root of Bitterneſs, which beareth Gall, and Wormwood, ſubdued, and ſlain, that receiving its Death Wound in the Soul, it may no longer have the Dominion over us. To this End, as we muſt, by Faith, repair to the Blood of Chriſt, for the Pardon of our Guilt, both original and actual, ſo muſt we unfeignedly repent, and turn from all Sin, both of Heart and Life, that we may be renewed unto a Life of Holineſs, for the Time to come. The ſtronger is our Faith, and the more ſincere, and thorough, our Repentance is, by ſo much the more will indwelling Corruption be mortified in us, and *Grace will reign in us, unto eternal Life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*, Rom. i. 21. Let us, then, whenever we find our ſelves tempted, and enticed to Sin, through the corrupt Workings of our own Hearts, or the Allurements of the World, ſtrongly reſiſt the Temptation, by conſidering the infinite Evil of all Sin, even the leaſt, and how alluring ſoever it may appear, under its falſe Pretentions of Friendſhip to us, yet, ſuch is the deadly Nature of it, that there is an abſolute Neceſſity of one of theſe two Things, either, that we muſt repent of it, or, we muſt ſuffer for it; neither of which are to be choſen by a wiſe Man, if they can poſſibly be avoided. Wherefore,

1. Remember, that if, at any Time, you gratify the corrupt Part which is in you, by complying with any Temptation to Sin, you muſt certainly repent of it. There is not the leaſt Sin, that any Man can poſſibly commit, but he muſt, he will, repent of it, one Time, or other; and if his Repentance be ſeaſonable, and hearty, *it will be the beſt Thing that he*

can do. Not that his Repentance can take away the Guilt of his Sin ; for it is only the Merits of the Obedience, and Sufferings, and Death, of Chriſt, who has appeared a Surety for us, and borne the Curſe, in our Stead, that can take away our Guilt, by diſarming the Law of its Power to condemn us ; yet, Repentance is made abſolutely neceſſary, by the Appointment of God, and from the Nature of Things, to our being ſaved ; as I ſhall more particularly ſhew hereafter. But if any Sinner does not willingly and deſignedly repent, and turn from his Sins, now, whilſt he has the Opportunity of benefiting himſelf by it, he ſhall, finally, be forced to the *bitter Part* of Repentance, whether, he will, or no, when it will be all too late, and to no good Purpoſe, for him. And is Repentance ſo pleaſant, and delightful, as that any Man ſhould chuſe to do that which will neceſſarily bring him to it ? Do but conſider what is included in Repentance, and then ſay, whether any wiſe Man would chuſe to allow himſelf in any Sin whatever. The leaſt that can be ſuppoſed in Repentance is, an hearty Sorrow that ever we have ſinned, and a deep Concern of Mind, to have the Guilt of our Sin done away. And would any wiſe, and thinking Perſon, allow himſelf in that which he knoweth, beforehand, he ſhall certainly be ſorry for afterwards ? Will it not be very burdenſom to him, to have his Mind filled with Uneaſineſs ? To have his own Heart reproach him, and taunt him, for his Folly, in doing that which he knew would be juſt Matter of Grief to him ? And how great will be the Difficulty of getting his Mind freed from this Burden, and of obtaining any clear Perception, any comfortable Hope, that his Sin is forgiven him, and God is at Peace with him : But and if the Sinner does not experience this Shame, and Sorrow, for his paſt Sins, now, and that ſo prevalent in him, as to make him dread, and abhor,

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and carefully watch, and ſtrive againſt, and endeavour to avoid, every ſinful Thing, for the future, and ſo as to produce a real Reformation, and Amendment in him, he will hereafter be more grievouſly ſorry, and even be filled with Rage, and Indignation againſt himſelf, another Day, when he ſhall come to lie down in everlaſting Sorrow, without a Poſſibility of his ever being ſaved from it. And is it fitting, and reaſonable, for any Man to buy Repentance at ſo dear a Rate! Let therefore the Thought that you muſt, ſooner, or later, repent; be ſtrong, and forcible, to prevail upon you, now, immediately, and without Delay, to break off from all your Iniquities, to yield no ſinful Compliances with the corrupt Deſires of the Fleſh, or of the Mind, but reſiſt, ſtrenuouſly, in the Faith, all Temptations thereunto; though they ſhould be gilded over with ever ſo ſplendid an Appearance. Come, now, to the good Reſolution, which *Elihu* propoſed, Job xxxiv. 31, 32. *Surely, it is meet to be ſaid unto God,—I will not offend any more;—if I have done Iniquity, I will do no more.*

2. Remember, ſeriouſly, and often, remember, that if you are found, at laſt, in your Sins, you muſt ſuffer for it. If the Guilt of Sin remain chargeable upon you, and you are under the Power of Corruption, when you come to ſtand before your Judge, (as certainly this will be the Condition of all unconverted, impenitent Sinners,) that Guilt, and Pollution, will as certainly bring a moſt heavy Puniſhment upon you. For, *it is but a righteous Thing with God*, to puniſh them that go on in Diſobedience to him, and refuſe to be reclaimed. Hence, they that ſin, are ſaid, *To do ſuch Things as are worthy of Death*, Rom. i. 32. That is, they deſerve Death for what they do, the natural Conſcience of Man himſelf being Judge. For thus every Man judgeth, and that rationally, when the Caſe is brought Home

Home to himſelf. There is no Man but what judgeth, that a diſobedient Child, or Servant, ought to be corrected. And what Man is there, who does not judge, that, he, that ſhould rob him of his Intereſt, or reproach his Name, or make a vile Attempt upon his Life, and give him many a Wound, would deſerve to be puniſhed? Are not theſe Things Crimes, deſerving to be puniſhed, when they are committed againſt another, as well as when againſt ourſelves? Yea, is not the Crime ſo much the greater, when committed againſt the infinitely great, and wiſe, and good, and holy, God, than when it is only againſt a poor, mean, Worm of the Duſt? Verily; all Sin is a robbing the great God of the Glory due unto his Name, and an impudent, though vain, Attempt, to deſtroy his very Being. Doth it not then deſerve to be puniſhed, when ſuch a Crime is levelled againſt the Majeſty of Heaven, and Earth, as when it is levelled againſt ourſelves? Let no Man deceive himſelf. Thy own Conſcience telleth thee, that thy Sin deſerveth to be puniſhed. And is not the Puniſhment ſevere enough to deter thee from being guilty of the Crimes that deſerve it? To loſe the Favour of God, who is the Fountain of all Good; to be baniſhed from Heaven, and Happineſs, and never more know Light, and Joy; to be caſt out into outer Darkneſs, and lie down in Hell, in everlaſting Burnings; to be aſſociated with Devils, and damned Spirits, in the infernal Priſon; and to be in exquiſite Pain, and Torment, forever and ever! Is not this Puniſhment heavy enough! Or, canſt thou make Light of it, as if it were eaſy to undergo all this? Make the Trial; hold thy Hand in the Flame, for one Quarter of an Hour? Doſt thou ſhrink, and ſtart back, at the Thought of it! How then wilt thou bear to lie in the Fire of Hell, Soul, and Body, throughout eternal Ages? Well then, knowing the Terrors of the Lord, O

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be perſwaded, with all Earneſtneſs to mortify thy corrupt Part, diligently to ſhun that Sin, and ſtrenuouſly reſiſt thoſe Temptations thereto, which, if complied with, and indulged, will moſt certainly bring upon thee all this amazing Puniſhment, without a Poſſibility of thy eſcaping.

See, then, how much all Sin ought to be hated, ſubdued, and mortified, by thee, ſince it ſpoils thee of thy Glory, and expoſeth thee to the greateſt Miſery. Thou wouldſt not have needed to be ſaved, for thou wouldſt have been in no Danger, if it had not been for Sin. And wilt thou, then, hug this thy grand Enemy, and cheriſh it in thy Boſom, as though it were thy beſt Friend? Jer. ii. 19. *Know therefore, and ſee, that it is an evil Thing, and bitter, that thou haſt forſaken the Lord, thy God*: And when ever thou art ſolicited, and enticed, to gratify the corrupt Workings of thy own Heart, or comply with the Temptations of others, to do any Thing that is offenſive to thy God, call to mind the deadly Conſequents of all Sin, and ſay with *Joſeph*, Gen. xxxix. 9. *How ſhall I do this great Wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God?* Go, therefore, to God in Chriſt, with thy earneſt Importunity that he would graciouſly give unto thee Repentance unto Life, and Salvation; and let thy Heart be ever under the Aw of thoſe Words of Wiſdom, with which I now conclude; Prov. viii. 36. *He that ſinneth againſt me, wrongeth his own Soul; all they that hate me, love Death.*

SERMON

The Poſſibility of a Sinner's Salvation.

SERMON V.

ACTS XVI. 30.

And ſaid, Sirs, What muſt I do to be ſaved?

THESE Words preſent us with the View of the very great Solicitude, and Concern of Mind, the *Jaylor* was in, about the Salvation of his Soul, being very inquiſitive to know, and willing to do, all that was neceſſary, in Order to his being eternally ſaved: And what was his great Concern, ought to be ours: From whence I have noted this Doctrine, namely,

DOCT. It is of the higheſt Concernment to periſhing Sinners, to be very ſolicitous, what they ſhall do to be ſaved; or to know, and practiſe, all that is neceſſary, in Order to their Salvation. I have propoſed to ſpeak to this Text, and Doctrine, in the following Method, *viz.*

I. To ſhew you what it is to be ſaved, or, what is that Salvation which periſhing Sinners ſtand in Need of.

II. That

II. That periſhing Sinners may be ſaved ; there is a Poſſibility, notwithſtanding their preſent miſerable Condition, that they may be eternally ſaved.

III. That periſhing Sinners muſt know, and practiſe, all that is neceſſary, in Order to their Salvation; there is ſomething to be done, by them, that they may be ſaved.

IV. This is a Matter of the higheſt Concernment to them, and therefore they ought to be moſt ſeriouſly ſolicitous about it.

I have already ſpoken to the firſt of theſe Heads, and have ſhewed you what it is to be ſaved ; what is intended, and meant, by the Phraſe, in the Goſpel-Senſe of it ; what the *Jaylor* was apprehenſive he needed ; and what every Sinner will unavoidably periſh without : Namely, a Salvation of the whole Man, but which the Soul is, in a more peculiar Manner, the Subject of, and which conſiſteth in a Deliverance from all that Evil, both Moral and Penal, which every Sinner is periſhing under the Power of ; and in the Poſſeſſion of all that Good, which Sinners are deſtitute of, and want. Which may ſerve to ſhew us the ſad, and lamentable Condition Sin has brought all Mankind into ; fill us with Love and Admiration of the dear Redeemer ; and ſhould raiſe our Indignation, and Abhorrence, againſt our Apoſtacy, the Fountain of Evil in us ; and put us upon unwearied Endeavours to mortify Sin in us, remembring, that we muſt repent of Sin, or dreadfully ſuffer for it. I ſhall now proceed, by divine Aſſiſtance, to the Conſideration of the Second General Head propoſed, *viz.*

II. That periſhing Sinners may be ſaved ; there is a Poſſibility notwithſtanding their preſent miſerable Condition, that they may be eternally ſaved. Though it be true, that every Sinner has forfeited Heaven,

Heaven, and Happineſs, and has deſerved the Wrath, and Curſe of God ; which is moſt ſolemnly denounced againſt all Ungodlineſs, and Unrighteouſneſs, of Men, and will, moſt certainly, and terribly, be executed, in the utmoſt Fulneſs thereof, upon every guilty Sinner, another Day, if he repent not ; yet is it alſo a moſt glorious Truth, and Heart-reviving Conſideration, that, after all the Provocations they have given to the divine Majeſty, and their Ill-deſervings at his Hands, poor Sinners, pining in their Sin, and Guilt, may poſſibly be ſaved from that Wrath, which is juſtly due unto them, and be reſtored to the Happineſs which they have loſt. Were there no Poſſibility of this, it would be altogether in vain for any Sinner to entertain any Thought about being ſaved ; for all his Care, and Concern about it, would not, in the leaſt, affect that, which has not ſo much as a bare Poſſibility, that it ever ſhould be ; and all the Exhortations of the Goſpel, and Perſuaſions of the Miniſters of it, to the poor Creature, to do any Thing towards his own Salvation, would be ſo far from manifeſting any real Pity, and Compaſſion to him, or ſhewing any Act of Kindneſs to him, or Deſire to help him, that they would be but a cruel ſporting with his Miſery, and mocking at his Calamity ; and our ſevere Taunts, and Sarcaſms, would but add to his Unhappineſs, and make that which is his Torment, ſit the heavier upon him ; becauſe his Condition would be, like that of Devils, to lie down in endleſs Deſpair,

It is the Hope of Succeſs, that putteth a Man upon taking any Pains, to obtain the Good he wanteth, or to free himſelf from the Evil he is apprehenſive of. This maketh the Huſbandman toil, and ſweat, becauſe, *he that ploweth, ploweth in Hope* of a Crop ; this putteth the Merchant upon venturing his Goods, and the bold Sailor his Perſon,

upon

upon the boiſterous Ocean, in Hope of Gain ; and this animates the hardy Soldier to the Battle, even the Hope of Victory. And 'tis this Hope that giveth a Spring to all our Labours to be ſaved. The *Pſalmiſt* ſaid, Pſal. cxix. 166. *I have hoped for thy Salvation, and done thy Commandment.* The Hope of Salvation encourages to Obedience, and exciteth the Man to run, that he may obtain. Without Hope, the Man would not ſtir one Step, nor move one Finger, about it, but lie down in Deſpair, which forever cutteth the Sinews, and diſableth the Man for Labour. Unleſs the Sinner had ſome good Hope, or ſome good Foundation to build his Hope upon, that, notwithſtanding all the Guilt he is chargeable with, there is a Poſſibility of his being pardoned, and that he may eſcape all that Wrath, and Vengeance, that hangeth over his Head, he will never be ſolicitous to do any Thing towards his Salvation, nor be at all ſeriouſly inquiſitive, *what he muſt do to be ſaved :* But when he cometh to a thorough Apprehenſion, not only of the vaſt Ruin, that is impending over him, but, that there is a Poſſibility, notwithſtanding of his nefandous Wickedneſs, and though he hath brought this Miſery upon himſelf, by his own Folly, in rebelling againſt the Author of his Being, yet, that he may, after all, be delivered from the threatning Danger, upon proper Methods, and due Pains taken therefor : This addeth Vigour to his Mind, and Strength to his Arm, it maketh him inquiſitive, what is neceſſary to be done, and willing to put his Hand to the Work ; this maketh him reſolute, and couragious, diligent, and laborious, and ſtirreth him up to a Readineſs to lay himſelf out, to maſter all the Difficulties, and Impediments that lie in his Way, that he may, ſince it is poſſible, eſcape ſo great an Evil, as that which threatneth him, and obtain ſo matchleſs a Good, as that which is ſet before him. When they of old, who were

exhorted

exhorted to Repentance, cried, Jer. xviii. 12. *There is no Hope*; either that their paſt Iniquities ſhould be forgiven, or, that they ſhould eſcape the Judgment threatned, it is no Wonder to hear them ſaying, in the following Words, *We will walk after our own Devices, and we will every one do the Imagination of his evil Heart:* They will be at no Pains to turn from their evil Ways, and to make their Doings good. But if *we hope for that we ſee not, then do we, with Patience,* (in the Uſe of our beſt Endeavours) *wait for it.* Rom. viii. 25.

This, therefore, is the Encouragement, which I am, now, in the Name of my great and gracious Maſter, to give unto every Sinner here before the Lord, (and to all that read this) that though your Sins have brought you into a moſt deplorable, and periſhing Condition, yet there is a Poſſibility, that the greateſt Sinner of you all may be ſaved. Sirs, your Caſe is not altogether hopeleſs, and without Remedy; no, bad as it is, there is a *May be* of Mercy, an *who can tell* but the Lord will be gracious unto you: and if there were no more than this, it is enough to preſerve from Deſpair, and quicken you to Duty; but I can aſſure thee, there is Balm in Gilead, there is a Phyſician there, ſo that the Hurt of the Daughter of my People may be healed; if it be not their own Fault. Here then, that I may diſcourſe diſtinctly, let us conſider,

I. What Sinners may be ſaved. And,
II. The Ground of Hope, that there is a Poſſibility, that periſhing Sinners may be ſaved.

I. What Sinners are they that poſſibly may be ſaved? Or, to whom is it poſſible that they may obtain the Salvation of their Souls? And this is to be affirmed of every Sinner, that is, as yet, but in a periſhing Condition, and is not wholly periſhed, and

and loſt forever, beyond all Recovery. That is to ſay, every Sinner that is, as yet, on this Side of eternal Miſery, who yet enjoyeth the Day, and Means, of Grace, and has Time, and Opportunity to work out his own Salvation. The *Apoſtle*, referring to the Promiſe which God the *Father* made to his Son, to hear, and help him, in building up his Church, in the World, ſaying, Iſa. xlix. 8. *I have heard thee, in a Time accepted, and in the Day of Salvation have I ſuccoured thee*; maketh Application of this, unto every one, unto whom the Goſpel of Salvation is preached, and ſaith, 2 Cor. vi. 2. *Behold, now is the accepted Time; behold, now is the Day of Salvation.* That is, now, while we are in this World, under the Enjoyment of the Means of Grace, whilſt the Patience, and Forbearance of God, is exerciſed towards Sinners, and Chriſt, and Grace, and Heaven, are offered to them; now, whilſt it is a Time of Probation, and Trial, with them, and while as yet the State of Retribution has not overtaken them. Here,

1. 'Tis true, that there are ſome Sinners who cannot hope for Salvation.

There are ſome Sinners, who never enjoyed any Day, and Means, of Grace, and Salvation; and there are others, whoſe Day of Grace is over with them; neither of theſe can hope for Salvation, for it is not poſſible to them; but as for all ſuch, upon whom God is waiting, that he may be gracious, their Salvation is poſſible.

(1) There are ſome Sinners who never enjoyed any Day of Grace; with whom, there never was any Time of Probation, and Trial, for eternal Happineſs; for whom, a Saviour from Sin, and Wrath, never was provided; and who never had one Offer of Salvation made to them: And with Reſpect unto ſuch Sinners, there is no Room to hope, that they will ever obtain Mercy from God, but Salvation is utterly, and everlaſtingly, impoſſible to

them. This is the ſad Caſe of Apoſtate Spirits, thoſe, once glorious, Angels that kept not their firſt Eſtate, but left their own Habitation. *How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, Son of the Morning!* It would be in vain for them to cry out, What muſt *we* do to be ſaved. The infinitely gracious God has no Reſerves of Mercy for them; Chriſt took not on him the Nature of Angels; therefore is Salvation far from them: They ſinned without a Tempter, and therefore are puniſhed without any Mixture of Mercy, but *are reſerved in everlaſting Chains, under Darkneſs, unto the Judgment of the great Day*, Jude ver. 6. So that there is no Poſſibility of their Eſcape from that miſerable State they are doomed unto.

(2) There are other Sinners whoſe Time of Probation is at an End, and the Day of Grace, which they once enjoyed, is forever over with them; they are entred upon the State of Retribution, and inherit the Reward of all their evil Deeds. This is the unhappy Condition, of all ſuch as have died in their Sins, and gone into the other World in an impenitent, unconverted Frame, and carried all their unpardoned Guilt with them. When they were in this World, the Door of Hope ſtood open to them; God called upon them to repent, and turn from all their Tranſgreſſions; Chriſt wooed them, with much Entreaty, to come to him, and live; they enjoyed many precious Means, and Opportunities, and Seaſons of Grace; they were waited upon Year after Year, and Sabbath after Sabbath; but now that they are gone down to the Congregation of the Dead, the Door is ſhut, forever ſhut, upon them; and there is no Room for them now, ſince they did not before, to cry, *What ſhall we do to be ſaved.* So the old World had their Day of Patience, and Long-ſuffering, all the while that *Noah*, a Preacher of Righteouſneſs, warned them of the approaching Deluge

luge, and then they might, poſſibly, have improved their Advantages, the Price they had in their Hands, to have ſecured the Favour of God, and to have eſcaped the Damnation of Hell, but ſeeing they had no Heart therefor, *they are, now, Spirits in Priſon*, 1 Pet. i. 19, ſhut up under the Curſe, without a Poſſibility of their ever altering their Condition for the better. Though while there is Life, there is Hope, yet dead, and damned, Sinners cannot hope for the Mercy, and Truth, of God; for *there is no Work, nor Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wiſdom, in the Grave*, Eccl. ix. 10. there remaineth no more an Opportunity, or Capacity, to do any Thing for the Welfare of their Souls; their State is fixed, and unalterable, throughout Eternity; ſo that, if they are not ſaved already, it is wholly impoſſible they ever ſhould be. This our *Saviour* giveth us to underſtand, by the Parable of the rich Man, where *Dives*, having paſſed through his State of Probation, and entered upon that of Reward, and finding it to be a State of Uneaſineſs, and Torment, to him, entreateth *Abraham*, to ſend *Lazarus* to *dip the Tip of his Finger in Water, and cool his Tongue*; that is, to adminiſter any, the leaſt Degree, of Comfort to him. In Anſwer to which, *Abraham* firſt, ſheweth him the Unreaſonableneſs of his Requeſt, for that, in his Life-Time, he enjoyed his good Things, and did not make a wiſe Improvement of them, and, now, it was but juſt, that, in that World he was lodged in, he ſhould go without them: *Son*, (ſaid he,) *remember, that thou, in thy Life-Time, receiveſt thy good Things*: And, then, he letteth him know the utter Impoſſibility of his Requeſt's being granted, from the irreverſible Determination of the ſupream Lord of all, who hath ſo fixed the State of every Man, in the other World, as by an unpaſſable Gulf, that none can alter their Condition, and go from the one to the other: *Beſides all this, be-*

tween us, and you, there is a great Gulf fixed, ſo that they which would paſs from hence, to you, cannot, neither can they paſs to us, that would come from thence. Luke xvi. 25, 26. So that ſuch as have gone out of this World, in their Sins, with their unpardoned Guilt, and depraved Nature, both rendering them unfit for the Society of the Bleſſed above, are not in a periſhing Condition, but have totally periſhed already; and therefore all Hope, of their being ſaved, is cut off, and gone forever; there is no poſſible Way, that we know of, by which they can be reſcued from that State of Damnation, which, by the righteous, and unchangeable, Judgment of God, has already ſeized upon them.

2. But then, as for all ſuch Sinners, as are on this Side the Grave, and the eternal World; who are not yet gone down to the Blackneſs of Darkneſs forever; who have the Grace of the Goſpel preached, and the Offers of Salvation mercifully tendered, to them; theſe, whatever be their Circumſtances in this World, either civilly, or morally conſidered, whether they be high, or low, or whether they are greater or leſſer Sinners, may, notwithſtanding all, be finally ſaved: There is a Poſſibility, though they are, at preſent, in ſuch a State as that it may truly be ſaid of them, they are miſerably periſhing, yet, that they may, after all, by the aſtoniſhing Grace of God, be truly converted, and eternally ſaved.

I know but of one Exception, out of all the various Sorts of Sinners, that can be thought of; and that is, of ſuch as are guilty of *the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt*, of which our Lord ſaid, Matth. xii. 32. *It ſhall not be forgiven, neither in this World, neither in the World to come.* What this Sin *againſt the Holy Ghoſt* is, I think, we may ſufficiently underſtand, by conſidering of the Context: For there we find, that our *Saviour* having wrought

divers

divers notable Miracles, as particularly, the caſting out of Devils, which could, by no Rules of Reaſon, be ſuppoſed to be performed by the Aſſiſtance of Devils, becauſe this would ſuppoſe Satan to be divided againſt himſelf, but were wrought by the Agency of the Divine Power, or, by the Power of the *Holy Ghoſt*; yet, the *Phariſees*, who had evident Conviction of the Truth of the Miracle, and all imaginable Reaſon to conclude it was performed by a divine Energy, from the very Nature, and End, of the Miracle, that they might evade the Force, which the Acknowlegment of its being wrought by the *Holy Ghoſt*, would bring them under, to own Jeſus Chriſt to be a Perſon truly ſent from God, rather choſe to act contrary to the Light, and Convictions, of their own Minds, and proſecute their Enmity to Chriſt, by a malicious, and wilful, imputing his Miracles to the Agency of the Devil. So that this Sin ſeemeth, to me, to conſiſt, in a Perſon's maliciouſly, and contrary to the Convictions of his own Mind, imputing the miraculous Works of the *Holy Ghoſt*, to the Operation of infernal Spirits. And this ſeemeth to be one Reaſon why this Sin, above all others, remaineth unpardonable; becauſe ſuch a fixed Malice, againſt Jeſus Chriſt, as influenceth any Perſon deſignedly, to reject the higheſt Evidence that can be given, of the Truth of his Miſſion from God, and conſequently, the Truth of the Doctrines which he taught, leaves no poſſible Way, for ſuch an one, to receive Conviction of his being the Saviour of Sinners, and therefore no Room for the pardoning Mercy of God to reach and ſave him.

Whether any, in our Days, may be guilty of this Sin, in the full Senſe of it, I am not able to ſay, becauſe I don't know but that occular Evidence of the Miracles of Chriſt, may be neceſſary to compleat it. But this I may venture to affirm, that none of thoſe, who conſcientiouſly ſit under

the Preaching of the Goſpel, have ever yet been guilty of this Sin, whatever their melancholly Thoughts of themſelves, may, at Times, ſuggeſt to them; becauſe it is ever accompanied with Malice, and Rage, againſt the Goſpel, and its Miniſtry. Setting aſide therefore ſuch Sinners againſt the *Holy Ghoſt*, (none of which, I may venture to ſay, are here,) and it muſt be affirmed, that, as to every other Sinner, who is yet alive in this World, how many ſoever his Tranſgreſſions may have been, and however highly aggravated, and long continued in, there is a Poſſibility of his being ſaved. Therefore you may obſerve, that Chriſt ſaid, in the Verſe before his Account of the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt; Ver. 31. *Wherefore, I ſay unto you, all Manner of Sin, and Blaſphemy, ſhall be forgiven unto Men.* Though the Dead cannot hope for the Mercy of God, yet the living Sinner has this to encourage him, to Pains, and Diligence, in working out his own Salvation, that the Thing is poſſible; as he, who was in great Danger of drowning, cried out, *Help, I am yet alive*; ſo may every Sinner ſay, I am yet alive, it is yet a Day of Grace with me, *Oh! What muſt I do to be ſaved!* As he yet enjoyeth the Means of Grace, he may poſſibly, be prevailed upon, though he has ſo long turned a deaf Ear to the Calls of the Goſpel, to embrace the Tenders of Mercy, and Pardon, and Life, which are as yet made to him, and be ſucceeded in his Endeavours to work the Work of God, and ſo happily partake of Salvation in the End. And this, I take it, is the comfortable Condition of every Sinner here, (or that ſhall read this,) even of the greateſt.

II. I am now to ſet before you, the Ground of Hope, that there is a Poſſibility, that periſhing Sinners may be ſaved. This will ſufficiently appear, by conſidering theſe four Things, viz. 1. The

Mercy

Mercy of God: 2. The Death of Chriſt: 3. The Offers of Salvation: And, 4. The Inſtances, on ſacred Record, of Sinners, and very great ones, being finally ſaved.

1. It is evident, from the Sovereignty, and Riches, of the Grace, and Mercy of God, that it is poſſible periſhing Sinners may be ſaved. By this, I do not mean, what may be argued, merely from ſuch Conſiderations as our natural Reaſon, deſtitute of Revelation, under the beſt Improvement of it, could entertain of the gracious, and merciful, Nature of God; for, I know of no Reaſon we have, to conclude the Poſſibility of the Salvation of ſinful Man, any more than of ſinning Angels, purely from any natural Conceptions we can have of the Nature of God: And therefore, by the Grace, and Mercy, of God, I underſtand, thoſe favourable Regards, which, according to the Counſel of his own Will, God hath determined to ſhew to the unworthy, miſerable, Children of Men, as he hath made the Revelation of ſuch his Deſigns of Favour to us, in his Holy Goſpel. Here obſerve,

1. The boundleſs Goodneſs of the divine Nature is the Origin, and Fountain, from whence all Acts of Favour, to any of the Creatures, are derived, and therefore from whence peculiarly flows all gracious, and merciful, Deſigns, to guilty, miſerable Creatures. If God were not infinitely good, there could be no Poſſibility of any Sinner's receiving any, the leaſt, Favour from him. But though God be infinitely good, yet that any guilty Creature ſhall eſcape the Puniſhment, which his Sin has juſtly deſerved, and be received into a State of Peace, and Friendſhip, with his offended Sovereign, does not neceſſarily reſult from the Goodneſs of the divine Nature, becauſe, poſſibly, the Demands of Juſtice, and the Rights of the divine Authority, and Holineſs, may lay in the

Way of conſummate Goodneſs exerciſing it ſelf, in ſuch a Manner, until ſome Expedient is fixed upon, for Juſtice, and Mercy, Righteouſneſs, and Peace, to meet, and harmonize, in the great Deſign. So that the Pardon, and Salvation, of a Sinner does not flow from any Neceſſity of Nature, in God, and therefore cannot be argued, by any Principles of Reaſon, from the divine Goodneſs; but they are free Acts of the divine Will, and (as all Acts of Grace are) muſt be reſolved into Good Pleaſure, and not Neceſſity of Nature. Accordingly, the Apoſtle ſpeaking of the original Purpoſe of God to ſave Sinners, reſolveth it into this, it is *according to the good Pleaſure of his Will*, Eph. i. 5. Hence it followeth, that we muſt firſt know what the Will of God is, relating to the Salvation of a Sinner, before we can conclude it poſſible, or not; and becauſe no Diſquiſition our rational Powers can make, into the divine Nature, will ever diſcover to us what turneth purely upon the divine Will, therefore there is a Neceſſity of our having a Revelation from God, which ſhall ſhew us what his Will is, in this Caſe, before we can peremptorily conclude any Thing about it. And therefore, by the Grace, and Mercy, of God, I underſtand, what God hath revealed to us, in his Goſpel, or Word, of his Deſigns of Grace, and Mercy, to poor Sinners; for this, and this only, is the ſolid Foundation of our Hope of Salvation, fetched from the Goodneſs of the divine Nature.

2. Such is the open, and full, Declaration, in the Goſpel, of the gracious, and merciful, Deſigns of God to Sinners, as doth abundantly evidence the Poſſibility of a poor periſhing Sinner's being ſaved. For, therein we have, not only a clearer Diſcovery, beyond what our natural Reaſon could make, that *the Lord, our God, is a God gracious, and merciful, long-ſuffering, and abundant in Goodneſs*; but alſo a full Account of what our God, accord-

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ing to his gracious Nature, and mere good Pleasure, has determined to do, even *to forgive Iniquity, Transgression, and Sin*, Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. *With thee*, saith the Psalmist, *there is Forgiveness, that thou mayst be feared.* Psal. cxxx. 4. Says the Apostle, 1 Joh. i. 9. *If we confess our Sins, he is faithful, and just, to forgive us our Sins.* And another Apostle assureth us, 1 Tim. i. 15. *This is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the World, to save Sinners.* God himself saith, Jer. xxxi. 34. *I will forgive their Iniquity, and I will remember their Sin no more.* And our blessed Lord commanded, Luke xxiv. 47. *That Remission of Sins should be preached, in his Name, among all Nations.* So that from these, and innumerable other, Texts of Scripture, which reveal to us God's gracious Designs, we may very fairly conclude, that it is possible for the very chief of Sinners to be saved: And there are two Considerations, respecting the Grace, and Mercy of God, made known unto us, in his holy Word, which plainly shew us, that every Sinner, even the greatest, may entertain the Hope of the Possibility of his finally finding Acceptance with God, if he will but diligently improve the Means he is directed to; namely, the Sovereignty, and Freedom, the Riches, and Fulness, of the Mercy, and Grace of our God.

First, The Mercy, and Grace of God is infinitely sovereign, and free. By the Sovereignty, and Freedom, of the Grace, and Mercy of God, I intend, that God acteth his own Pleasure, without being controuled by any, or accountable to any, for what he does therein; that there is nothing, out of the divine Nature, sufficient to procure Acts of Grace, or limit them; nothing, but what is in himself, that effectually moveth God to shew Mercy to any, or say how far his Mercy shall extend.

Grace, and Mercy, may be needed by a poor Creature,

Creature, and ſo he may be the proper Object of them, if there be nothing in the Way to hinder their reaching to him; but yet if ever God ſhew Favour to a guilty Sinner, it muſt be becauſe *it ſo pleaſeth him*; not becauſe he is neceſſitated, or obliged to it, but becauſe it is the free Act of his ſovereign Will, and Pleaſure. And, indeed, this is included in the very Notion we have of Grace, or Favour, that it is abſolutely free; to which Purpoſe, the Apoſtle elegantly, and moſt concluſively argueth, Rom. xi. 6. *If by Grace, then it is no more of Works; otherwiſe Grace is no more Grace; but if it be of Works, then it is no more Grace; otherwiſe Work is no more Work.* So that, how much ſoever the Condition of the Sinner may render him needy, yet, it is not from any Thing of Worthineſs, or Deſert, in the greateſt, and beſt of Men, that they partake of the Grace, and Mercy of God, in their Pardon, and Salvation; but from the good Pleaſure of God alone. Hence God ſays, Rom. ix. 15. *I will have Mercy, on whom I will have Mercy; and I will have Compaſſion, on whom I will have Compaſſion.* And the Apoſtle *Paul* giveth us this Account of the Sinner's Salvation, 2 Tim. i. 9. *Who hath ſaved us, and called us with an holy Calling, not according to our Works, but according to his own Purpoſe, and Grace, which was given us, in Chriſt Jeſus, before the World begun.*

From hence I argue, That ſince the Grace of God is ſovereign, and free, therefore there is Room for every Sinner, even the greateſt, and moſt unworthy, to hope that he, as well as any other, may poſſibly partake of the Benefits of it, and be ſaved; becauſe that which is freely diſpenſed, is equally free for every Perſon to receive, that will come, in the appointed Way, for the Reception of it. If we were to found our Hopes of Salvation upon any Excellency in our ſelves, or any Thing we have done, or can do, to deſerve

it, I doubt, no Sinner, upon a ſerious View of himſelf, and Reflection upon his paſt Life, would be able to form to himſelf any comfortable Hope, ſo much as of the Poſſibility of his Salvation; becauſe he may plainly ſee ſo much in his Heart, and Life, as renders him altogether unworthy of ſo great a Favour. But ſince the Grace of God is ſovereign, and free, this giveth proper Encouragement unto every individual Sinner to hope, that, if he will be at the Pains to labour after it, he may be a happy Sharer in the ſo great a Salvation.

Secondly; The Grace of God is infinitely rich, and full. By which I mean, that there is nothing in the Sinner, no Degree of Sinfulneſs, and aggravated Provocation, (except only the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, as I at firſt obſerved) that can ſet Bounds to the Mercy, and Grace of God; nothing out of God himſelf can limit the Flow of his Grace. The Reaſon of the Exception is not, becauſe they that commit the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt properly limit the Mercy of God, which is infinite, but becauſe ſuch never will come into the Way of receiving it; ſo that the Grace of God is every Way ſufficient to ſave any Sinner whatever, with whom it is yet a Day of Probation, and Trial. Therefore we read, Eph. i. 7. of *the Riches of his Grace*; and, Pſal. li. 1. of *the Multitude of his tender Mercies*; and that he will *abundantly pardon*, Iſa. lv. 7. All of which ſpeaketh the infinite Fulneſs of the Grace of God, ſo that no Unworthineſs, no Ill-deſervings, in the Sinner, ſhall hinder his partaking of it, if it be not his own Fault, by his obſtinate rejecting the Offers that are made to him. There is Grace, and Mercy, enough in God, to ſave the greateſt of Sinners, as effectually as the leaſt, becauſe there is ſuch a Fulneſs, and Sufficiency, of it, as is equal to the greateſt Extent of Sins, and the higheſt Demerit of the Sinner. Hence we may obſerve,

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though the *Epheſians* were very great Sinners, groſs Idolaters, vile Magicians, and lived in all abominable Immoralities, yet they became Heirs of the ſaving Grace of God, and the Apoſtle giveth this as the Reaſon of it, Eph. ii. 4, 5, 7. *God, who is rich in Mercy, for his great Love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in Sins, hath quickened us, together with Chriſt; by Grace ye are ſaved;---that in the Ages to come, he might ſhew the exceeding Riches of his Grace, in his Kindneſs towards us, through Jeſus Chriſt.* And the ſame Apoſtle giveth us this Account of the hideouſly black Sinners, among the *Corinthians*, 1 Cor. vi. 9---11. *But ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified, in the Name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

There is ſo much of Malignity in the Nature of every Sin, and ſo high an Injury, and Offence, offered to the infinitely great, and holy God, even by any one Sin, and that the leaſt that can be thought of, that nothing, ſhort of the infinite, rich Grace of God, can ſave the Sinner from the Guilt, and Puniſhment of it; and the ſame infinite Grace is every Way full, and ſufficient; for the Salvation of one Sinner, as well as of another, becauſe it is infinite: So that there is no Sinner hath ſo multiplied his Tranſgreſſions, but that the ſuper-abundant Mercy of God can multiply to pardon, and ſave him. Therefore the Apoſtle obſerves, Rom. v. 20. *Where Sin abounded, Grace did much more abound.*

From what I have briefly remarked, it is very evident, that every Sinner has ſufficient Encouragement, from the gracious Nature of God, diſcovered to him, in the divine Oracles, to hope that he may be ſaved, and to uſe his beſt Endeavour therefor, becauſe he may, from the Freeneſs and Riches, of divine Grace, plainly ſee, that there is

a Poſſibility that, after all his Wickedneſs, he may obtain Salvation.

2. It is farther evident, that it is poſſible that periſhing Sinners may be ſaved, if we conſider the great End of the Incarnation, and Death, of Jeſus Chriſt. It is, indeed, a marvellous Inſtance of the Grace and Mercy of God, and his aſtoniſhing Compaſſion, to poor miſerable Sinners, that he ſhould entertain the Thought of ſending his own Son into the World, to appear on our Behalf, and much more that he ſhould actually deliver him up, to become ſubject to the Law, and die a ſhameful, and painful, and curſed Death for us. And what was the great End of all this Grace, and Mercy, to poor Sinners? Why did Jeſus Chriſt aſſume our Nature, appear in our Fleſh, and tabernacle among Men upon Earth? Why did he ſubject himſelf to a Life of Sorrows, Harſhips, and Difficulties, and, at length, give up his Life, and that by his own voluntary Act, when he neither deſerved to have it taken from him, nor was it in the Power of all Creatures to deprive him of it, againſt his Will? Why, I ſay, did Jeſus Chriſt willingly ſubmit to all of this? Was it only to teach us Mortification to the World, and Reſignation to the Will of God? Any ordinary Perſon might have been made Uſe of, by the infinitely wiſe God, as a fit Inſtrument to this End; and there would have been no Occaſion for ſo extraordinary a Perſon as the Son of God, to have appeared, and died, for this Purpoſe only. Surely Chriſt came into the World, and ſuffered, and died, for no leſs End, and Purpoſe, than to be a compleat Saviour, for ſinful Man, in whoſe Nature he appeared, and ſuffered. Thus, as the Apoſtle expreſſes it, Gal. iv. 4, 5. *In the Fulneſs of Time, God ſent forth his Son, made of a Woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law.* Here,

1. Obſerve, That the End of Chriſt's appearing, and

and Death, was to be a *ſpiritual Saviour*. His great Deſign in all that he did, and ſuffered, was not to be a temporal *Saviour*, as the *Jews*, through the Darkneſs that was upon their Minds, expected him to be; but it was to be a ſpiritual, and eternal *Saviour*, to ſave from Sin, and Wrath, to free us from the Power of Sin over us, and to deliver poor Sinners from the Puniſhment of Sin, that Jeſus Chriſt deſcended from Heaven, was clothed with our Fleſh, and ſubjected himſelf to the Death of the Croſs. He wears the Character of a Saviour throughout the Book of God, and many ancient Propheſies of him ſpeak his being a ſpiritual one; but the New-Teſtament, which is a clearer Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt moſt fully ſetteth him forth to us in this Light. This is given as the Reaſon for his Name, Matth. i. 21. *Thou ſhalt call his Name Jeſus, for he ſhall ſave his People from their Sins.* The Word was made Fleſh, and died, for this very End, to take away our Guilt, and procure a Pardon for us, to deliver us from Wrath, and purchaſe eternal Life for us; that is to ſay, that we might be eternally ſaved. For this End, *God ſent not his Son into the World, to condemn the World, but that the World, through him, might be ſaved*, Joh. iii. 17. When God ſent his Son into a World, that had rebelled againſt him, and greatly expoſed themſelves to his righteous Diſpleaſure, had Mankind been generally apprehenſive of the Coming of ſuch a Perſon, they would have had ſufficient Reaſon to have feared, if not informed otherwiſe, that it was to make Repriſals upon them, to vindicate his *Father*'s Honour, and puniſh them very ſeverely for the Indignity, and Contempt they had caſt upon his *Father*; but this was not the End of that Miſſion of the Son of God; no; but, inſtead thereof, the grand Intention of the Son of God's being ſent into the World was, to ſave the World. To ſave

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the World from what? from Peſtilence, Famine, and Sword? No; we ſee the World plagued, and puniſhed, with theſe to this Day: But it was to ſave the World from the Power, and Guilt, of Sin, and to bring Men to God, and to eternal Life. *God ſo loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth on him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting Life*, Joh. iii. 16. Jeſus Chriſt came into the World, to prevent Sinners periſhing, to reſcue them from their Miſery, and to procure Life, and Happineſs for them. This was an End befitting an infinitely wiſe God to project, and worthy the Son of God to accompliſh. Therefore, when Chriſt was in the World, he ſaid, Joh. x. 11, 28. *I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd giveth his Life for the Sheep.--- And I give unto them eternal Life, and they ſhall never periſh; neither ſhall any Man pluck them out of my Hand.* Let this ſuffice at preſent.

SERMON

SERMON VI.

ACTS XVI. 30.

And said, Sirs, What must I do to be saved?

I AM upon arguing the Possibility of the Sinner's Salvation, from the great End of the Incarnation and Death of Jesus Christ; and have observed, that the great End of Christ's appearing, and Death, was to be a spiritual Saviour. I now go on to say,

2. The Death of Christ was a proper Sacrifice. It was an expiatory Sacrifice, offered to his eternal *Father*, in our Room, and Stead, to make Atonement for our Sins, to take away our Guilt, and reconcile us unto God, by the Blood of the Cross. The whole Law, and Intention, of Sacrifices, was attended, and fully answered, in his Death. He, who was perfectly innocent, was slain, and that not for himself, but on the Behalf of those that were guilty; and was offered up unto God, and the Virtue of his Death is pleadable with God for the Remission

Remiſſion of Sins, and the divine Acceptance. Iſa. liii. 5, 6. *He was wounded for our Tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our Iniquities ;---- and the Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all.* 1 Pet. iii. 18. *Chriſt hath once ſuffered for Sins ; the Juſt for the Unjuſt ; that he might bring us to God.* Rom. iv. 25. *He was delivered for our Offences, and was raiſed again for our Juſtification.* Eph. v. 2. *Chriſt hath given himſelf for us, an Offering, and a Sacrifice to God.* Heb. ix. 12. *By his own Blood, he entred in once into the holy Place, having obtained eternal Redemption for us.* From all which it is plainly evident, that Chriſt died, not merely as an Example of Patience, and Reſignation, to the Will of God, but, as our Subſtitute, who therein ſuffered the Penalty due unto us for our Sins, and ſo his Death was a proper Sacrifice of Atonement. He took Part in the ſame Fleſh, and Blood, with us, that he might come into a Capacity of dying, and that ſo that Nature, which had offended God, might ſuffer ; and *he taſted Death for every Man,* Heb. ii. 9. But foraſmuch as it was not poſſible for him to be holden of Death, becauſe of his own perfect Innocency, and the divine Power he was inveſted withal, therefore he is riſen for our Juſtification : By his Reſurrection from the Dead, giving us utmoſt Aſſurance, that he hath compleatly anſwered all the Demands of the Law, and Juſtice, of God ; and that therefore we, through him, may now be juſtified before the Tribunal of God, without any, the leaſt, Impeachment of his Juſtice, and Holineſs ; and that now *He* (Chriſt) *is able to ſave unto the uttermoſt, all that come unto God by him ; ſeeing he ever liveth to make Interceſſion for them.* Heb. vii. 25.

3. From hence we may argue, that it is very evident, there is a Poſſibility that every Sinner, who has the Goſpel preached to him, may be ſav-

ed; and that if we conſider, both, for whom Chriſt died; and the efficacious Extent of the Virtue of his Death.

1. Let us conſider a little for whom they were that Jeſus Chriſt died. Surely, he was not at the Pains of dying for thoſe, who had no Sin chargeable upon them, and who therefore were in no Danger, whoſe State, and Condition, was already ſafe, and their Happineſs ſecure. For ſuch needed no Sacrifice of Atonement, and therefore no *Saviour*. But we are told, Matth. xviii. 11. *The Son of Man is come to ſave that which was loſt.* They were the poor, loſt, undone Sinners, whom Chriſt came to ſave; and therefore ſuch as we are. He did not come to ſave righteous Perſons, who had never offended the infinitely holy God; but guilty Sinners, who had provoked the divine Anger, and were liable to the Wrath, and Curſe of God. Hence Chriſt himſelf ſaid, Matth. ix. 12, 13. *They that be whole need not a Phyſician, but they that are ſick: I am not come to call the Righteous, but Sinners, to Repentance.* So that they are Sinners, whom Chriſt died for, and came to ſave; Sinners indefinitely, that is, any Sinner, and every Sinner, that will accept of Salvation by him: Not the more ordinary, and leſs offenſive Sinners only, but all Sorts of Sinners, and ſuch as ſeem to bid the faireſt to be utterly loſt, and undone, by the Number and Aggravation, of their Sins, yet, even ſuch as theſe, while on this Side Death, and Hell, and capable Subjects of Mercy, may poſſibly be eternally ſaved. And therefore Chriſt will reject no one Soul that cometh to him for Salvation. He hath ſaid, Joh. vi. 37. *Him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out.*

2. If we conſider the efficacious Extent of the Virtue of the Death of Chriſt, we ſhall ſee the Ground of Hope, given to every Sinner, that poſſibly he may be ſaved. For the Virtue of the

Death

Death of Chriſt is of ſufficient Extent to reach to all Sorts, and Degrees of Sins, though as deeply tinged as Scarlet, or Crimſon. 1 Joh. i. 7. *The Blood of Jeſus Chriſt his Son cleanſeth from all Sin:* Not from ſome Sins only, and thoſe of leſſer Guilt, but from all Sin, though of ever ſo deep a Stain. Therefore it is repreſented, Zech. xiii. 1. as a *Fountain opened, for Sin, and for Uncleanneſs*: As a *Fountain*, there is a ſufficient Fulneſs in it; it is a Fountain *opened*, to which every one may repair; for *Sin, and Uncleanneſs*, for every Kind, and Degree of Sins. So that the moſt profligate, and notorious Sinners, Sinners as infamous, and deteſtable, as a ravening *Publican*, or a common *Proſtitute*, may waſh therein and be clean. This Chriſt gives us Aſſurance of, when he ſaid to the Phariſees, Matth. xxi. 31. *Publicans, and Harlots, go into the Kingdom of God, before you.* The very worſt of Sinners, by becoming the Followers of Jeſus, partake of the Benefits of his Death, before the leſs offenſive Phariſee, who refuſes to own, and ſubmit to him.

The Virtue of Chriſt's Death is founded in the Dignity of his Perſon, and in the *Father*'s Appointment of him to the high Office of a *Saviour*; and therefore muſt be equal to all that the Father demandeth, in Way of Satisfaction, to repair the Injury done, unto him, by Sin. And that the Death of Chriſt was every Way equal to the Demands of the *Father*, is abundantly evident, from his, the *Father*, releaſing Jeſus out of the Priſon of the Grave, by a glorious, triumphant Reſurrection. Hence therefore the Merits of the Death of Chriſt are ſufficient to extend, in the full Efficacy of them, to one Sinner, as well as to another, to Sinners of every Denomination, yea, to the very chief of Sinners: Which made the *Apoſtle* ſay, 1 Tim. i. 15. *Jeſus Chriſt came into the World to ſave Sinners, of whom I am chief.* So that Chriſt,

by dying, has broken aſunder the Bars of the Pit, and procured Liberty for the lawful Captives of Hell, and has unbarred the Gates of Heaven, and made it poſſible for the greateſt, and vileſt of Sinners, to have a free Admittance into that Kingdom of God.

Since therefore it is the great End of the Incarnation, and Death, of the Son of God, to ſave Sinners, and that of every Sort, and the Merits of his Death are efficaciouſly extenſive to the moſt enormous Offender, this ſhews, it is poſſible, that thou, O Sinner, mayſt be ſaved, by him; Chriſt is able to ſubdue thy Corruptions, to forgive thy Sins, to redeem thee from Death, and Hell, and to bring thee to Heaven. None are excluded from the Benefits of the Merits of the Death of Chriſt, but thoſe that exclude themſelves, by their turning their Back upon him, and refuſing to accept his offered Salvation.

3. It is very evident, from the whole Tenor of the Goſpel-Offer, that there is a Poſſibility that periſhing Sinners may be ſaved. The Deſign of the Grace of God, and the Gift of Chriſt, as a *Saviour*, to a ſinful World, would, perhaps, have been all ineffectual, and to no Purpoſe, if it had not pleaſed God to make known unto the World, that he had entertained Thoughts of Mercy towards ſinful Man, and provided a Saviour for him; and made the Tender of Salvation to us, in and by him. Now this is the general Scope, and Intendment, of the divine Revelation, contained in our Bible, to make known to us the divine everlaſting Purpoſes of Mercy to loſt Sinners, and ſhew us the Method, which God, in his infinite Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, has fixed upon, in which to recover a periſhing World from their wretched, miſerable Condition, into a State of Peace, and Friendſhip with himſelf, and, conſequently, unto compleat, and endleſs Happineſs; and, herewith-

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al, to make the Offer, of Pardon, and Grace, and Life, to every Sinner where the Goſpel is preached. Thus the glad Tydings was, firſt, publiſhed to *Adam*, by God himſelf, and in him to all the World, in that grand Foundation Promiſe, of *the Seed of the Woman bruiſing the Head of the Serpent*, Gen. iii. 15. In the Faith of this, the ancient Patriarchs lived upon the Expectation of the *Saviour*, and Deliverer; and, doubtleſs, the traditionary Account of this, laid the Foundation of all the World's hoping for the pardoning Mercy of God. Upon the Birth of the promiſed Seed of the Woman, into the World, the joyful News was publiſhed, by a Chorus of the heavenly Hoſts; and ever ſince, in various Ways, down unto our Time, there has been an open Publication, and Offer, of Salvation, by Jeſus Chriſt; by Jeſus himſelf, and then by his immediate *Apoſtles*, and by the ſucceeding Miniſters of the Goſpel; and the like Publication, and Offer, will continue to be made, even to the End of the World. And this clearly ſhews the Poſſibility that periſhing Sinners may be ſaved. For do but conſider,

1. Why is it that the great God condeſcends to uſe Means with Sinners, to bring them to Salvation? Why does he not let them alone, to walk on in their own Way, to grope in the dark for what they want, and to ſport themſelves in the Light of the Sparks of their own Kindling, 'till they lie down in Sorrow? Why does he proclaim Liberty to the Captive, and the Opening of the Priſon-Doors unto them that are bound? Why, does he tell them of a *Saviour*, and a mighty One, provided for them; and ſhew them in what Way they may obtain Salvation by him? Why does he ſend his Miniſters, in his Name, to make the Offer of Salvation to them; to woo, and entreat Sinners that they would be reconciled unto God? Why does he ſend his Holy Spirit, in and with

the Preaching of the Goſpel, to move upon the Hearts of Sinners, and convince them of their Sin, and Miſery, and their Need of a *Saviour*, and to perſwade them to accept of Jeſus Chriſt, and all his ſaving Benefits ? Why, I ſay, is God at all this Coſt, and Pains, with poor deſpicable Sinners ? But to this very End, and Purpoſe, that he might *open their Eyes, and turn them from Darkneſs, to Light, and from the Power of Satan, unto God ; that they may receive the Forgiveneſs of Sins, and an Inheritance among them that are ſanctified, by Faith that is in me* ; ſaid Chriſt, Acts xxvi. 18. And *Paul* informs us, 1 Tim. ii. 4. *That God would have all Men to be ſaved, and come to the Knowledge of the Truth.*

As for thoſe to whom Salvation is not poſſible, the Wiſdom of God uſeth no ſuch Means ; he taketh no Pains with them ; he ſendeth no Goſpel, and its Miniſtry to them ; nor is it reaſonable to expect that he ſhould. The Devils, and damned Spirits, are beyond a Poſſibility of Salvation ; and therefore Chriſt, and Grace, and Heaven, are never preached, and offered, unto them. Though Chriſt a *Saviour*, by his Word, and Spirit, was once preached unto many of thoſe Spirits that are now in Priſon, yet he never was preached to them in Priſon, nor ever will be. Would they give ever ſo much, were it in their Power, to give it, that they might have but ſo much as one Offer of Pardon, and Life, made unto them, they never ſhall hear ſo much as one Sermon of the Poſſibility of their Salvation preached unto them, throughout all Eternity.

But to periſhing Sinners, while they are in this World, is this Grace given, that the unſearchable Riches of Chriſt are preached, and God is graciouſly making the moſt free, and full, Offer of Salvation, by Jeſus Chriſt, to them. He has given full Commiſſion to his Miniſters, to ſay to every Sinner,

Sinner, Luk. ii. 10, 11. *Behold I bring you good Tydings of great Joy,---unto you is born a Saviour, Chriſt the Lord:* Acts xiii. 38. *Be it known unto you, therefore, Men, and Brethren, that through this Man, is preached unto you the Forgiveneſs of Sins.*

2. The Offer of the Goſpel is univerſally extenſive to every individual Sinner that heareth it. The Commiſſion runneth in theſe Terms, Mark xvi. 15, 16. *Go ye, into all the World, and preach the Goſpel to every Creature; he that believeth, and is baptized, ſhall be ſaved. Every Creature,* that is, every Child of *Adam,* whereſoever the Word of this Salvation is ſent. There is no Man exempted out of the Proclamation of a general Pardon, but ſuch as except themſelves, by their own wilful Refuſal to come up to the Terms propoſed; that is, thoſe that will not accept the Offer. The Proclamation runneth in the moſt general Expreſſions that can be; Iſa. lv. 1, 2. *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the Waters; and he that hath no Money, come ye, buy, and eat, yea, come, buy Wine, and Milk, without Money, and without Price;---- incline your Ear, and come unto me, hear, and your Soul ſhall live.* Iſa. xlv. 22. *Look unto me, and be ye ſaved, all the Ends of the Earth.* Rev. xxii. *Whoſoever will, let him take of the Water of Life freely.* For Chriſt *gave himſelf a Ranſom for all,* 1 Tim. ii. 6. *And this is the Will of him that ſent me,* (ſaid Chriſt) *that every one which ſeeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlaſting Life,* John vi. 40. So that there is no Limitation of the Offer of Salvation, to this or that particular Perſon only, but every Sinner, under the Goſpel, has Salvation ſet before him, and graciouſly tendered to him, and ſhall aſſuredly be welcome, if he will but be ſo wiſe for himſelf, as to come and partake thereof, that he may live forever.

3. I would farther obſerve, The Divine Sincerity in the Offer of Salvation. Diſſimulation and

Hypocriſy, are far from God ; for *he is a God of Truth, and without Iniquity ; juſt, and right, is he,* Deut. xxxii. 4. And therefore as he maketh the Offer of Salvation, univerſally, unto all Men, without Exception, ſo he is moſt hearty, and ſincere, in the Tenders of Pardon, and Grace, and Life, to every poor Sinner. Why elſe does he make the Offer ? Why beſeech Sinners every where to accept it ? Why does he wait upon them with ſo much Patience, being unwilling to take a Denial ? And that there may be no Room left for any, even the greateſt of Sinners, to doubt, or call in Queſtion, the Sincerity, and Willingneſs of God, that he ſhould partake of the Goſpel-Salvation, the great God has been pleaſed to condeſcend to our Weakneſs, and Frailty, in giving to us the higheſt Confirmation of his Uprightneſs, and ſincerely honeſt Intention, by adding his Oath to his Word, in theſe ſtrong Terms, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. *As I live, ſaith the Lord God, I have no Pleaſure in the Death of the Wicked, but that the Wicked turn from his Way, and live ; turn ye, turn ye, from your evil Ways ; for why will ye die.* Thus by two immutable Things, in which it is impoſſible for God to lie, the Word, and Oath, of God, we may have ſtrong Conſolation, all imaginable Encouragement, in our flying for Refuge to lay hold on the Hope ſet before us. So that the Offers of the Goſpel do moſt clearly and fully evidence to us, the Poſſibility there is, that periſhing Sinners may be ſaved ; and that every particular Perſon, to whom this Goſpel is preached, may be as welcome to come, and accept of this Salvation, as if he were, therein, mentioned by Name. Oh ! if I could but ſee any Inſtances, of as vile Sinners as I am, that have partook of Salvation, perhaps, may ſome be ready to ſay, This would indeed encourage me to think that it will not be in vain for me to ſeek after it. Wherefore,

4. Laſtly,

4. Laſtly; Let us now take a View of the Inſtances, that are left us upon ſacred Record, of Sinners, great, and vile Sinners, being ſaved; and this will farther confirm to us the Truth of the Propoſition, the Poſſibility that periſhing Sinners may obtain Salvation; that Sinners of all Sorts, who yet have a Day of Grace, and Patience, lengthened out to them, may obtain the Pardon of their Sins, and the Salvation of their Souls, even all that Salvation ſet before them in the Goſpel. Here, the Time would fail me to mention, *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, and *Samuel*, and *David*, and the *Prophets*, the *Apoſtles* alſo, and the holy *Diſciples* of our Lord, recorded both in the Old, and New Teſtament, who were all of them guilty Sinners, and ſome of them very great Ones, and yet they found Mercy with God, and partook of his Salvation. Yea, the Time would fail me to take Notice of the many notorious Sinners, ſpoken of in the ſacred Pages, who afterwards became the Heirs of Salvation; as *Manaſſeh*, and *Rahab*, and *Mary Magdalene*, and the reſt of them. I ſhall therefore content myſelf, with ſome Touches upon the two famous Inſtances which my Text particularly relates to, namely, the Perſon ſpeaking, and the Perſon ſpoken to.

Firſt; Obſerve, who was the Perſon that ſpoke; who cried out in the Text, *Sirs, What muſt I do to be ſaved?* Was it not the *Jaylor*, at *Philippi*? Now it is very apparent that this Perſon, not only was one of the common Herd of Sinners among the *Philippians*, as a groſs Idolater, and doubtleſs, wallowed in impure Luſts, *whoſe God was their Belly, and whoſe Glory was in their Shame, and who minded only earthly Things*; but he was a very great Sinner, from the Account we have of his perſonal Behaviour. For, beſide his Crime, in readily receiving the faithful Servants of Chriſt into a Priſon, (if he were not concerned in the firſt Inſult

of

of the Rabble upon them,) and that for no other Cauſe, but their preaching the Goſpel of Chriſt, and ſhewing unto Men the true Way of Salvation, by the only Redeemer, whom God had appointed for that very End; which he (the *Jaylor*) ought by no Means to have done, if he had known it, as probably he did, becauſe by this he partook of their Crime, who unjuſtly committed them; I ſay, beſide this, he ſufficiently manifeſted his Hatred, and Malice, and perſecuting Spirit, againſt thoſe holy Servants of God, by *thruſting them into the Dungeon, and making their Feet faſt in the Stocks*, Acts xvi. 24. Hereby he plainly diſcovered his Enmity to the Croſs of Chriſt, the Cruelty of his Temper, and the inward Rancor of his Mind againſt thoſe holy Men, by inflicting upon them, a Puniſhment of his own deviſing, very diſtinct, from, and far exceeding, the Orders he had received from his Superiors, who only *charged him to keep them ſafely*, ℣. 23; that is, to keep a ſtrict Watch and Guard over them, that they might be brought out upon Trial, when demanded: Whereas, a *Dungeon*, and the *Stocks*, are diſtinct Puniſhments themſelves, and very different from a cloſe Confinement. Moreover, he was guilty of Self-Murder, in the Sight of God; and that not only by harbouring the Thought, and Intention in his Heart, but in proſecuting that his Intention, by an overt Act, ℣. 27. *He drew out his Sword, and would have killed himſelf*, if thoſe very Men of God, whom he had greatly abuſed, had not prevented him. This was ſuch a plain Proof of the Fierceneſs, and Cruelty, of the Man, his unbridled, and inſupportable Anger, and Rage, and of his real, murderous Deſign, as, in ſome Caſes, would have amounted to a legal Proof of Murder againſt him, in an humane Court of Judicature, which trieth, not the Hearts, but the Actions, of Men: And therefore much more rendered him guilty before that God, who

knoweth

knoweth all the Secrets of the Heart, and paſſeth Judgment upon them, as well as upon the outward Actions of the Children of Men. But if this be looked upon as the Effort of a ſudden Paſſion, which threw him into this Frame of Mind, then it only proves that he was ſo vile a Creature, as to be ready, upon every Temptation, to commit the moſt flagitious, and monſtrous Crimes.

And yet, after all this Wickedneſs, this poor, wretched, miſerable Creature was converted, and ſaved; for, *he believed in God, and was baptized*, ℣. 33, 34. That is, he believed in that God whom the *Apoſtle* made known to him, and he believed in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, whom the *Apoſtle* preached to him, he believed the Word of God, which *Paul* had declared to him, and accordingly made Profeſſion of his Faith, and Obedience to the Son of God, by being baptized into his Name.

Secondly; The other Inſtance I would take Notice of is that of the Perſon ſpoken to, in my Text, particularly the Apoſtle *Paul*, to whom, with *Silas*, the *Jaylor* cried out, *Sirs, What muſt I do to be ſaved?* This ſame *Paul*, while he wore the Name of *Saul*, was a very great, and notorious Sinner. Though he made his Boaſt, that, *touching the Rightcouſneſs of the Law, he was blameleſs*; having been a ſtrenuous Aſſerter, and fond Practicer, of the Rites, and Ceremonies, of the *Jewiſh* Church, yet, nevertheleſs, upon examining his open Conduct, we ſhall find, that he had been impious to God, and very injurious to Man; which he afterwards acknowledged, when he ſaid of himſelf, 1 Tim. i. 13. Who was, before, a *Blaſphemer, a Perſecutor, and injurious.* As a *Blaſphemer*, he was full of Malignity againſt Chriſt, and his Doctrines, every where ſpeaking againſt them, caſting all imaginable Contempt, and Reproach upon them, and not content with his own Revilings, and Blaſphemies, he pleaſed himſelf with the baſe, and

mean

mean Gratification, of exciting, and even *compelling others to blaſpheme*, Acts xxiv. 11. As a *Perſecutor*, he was an hot-headed, furious, bigotted, *Jewiſh* Zealot; and ſo madly ſet was he upon the cutting, or drawing all Men to his own Size, that he meanly craved Power, and Authority, from the chief Prieſt, *Acts* ix. 2. to execute the vileſt Office that could be, a buſy Purſevant, and lawleſs Cut-throat, that he might vent his Rage upon the poor Chriſtians, and perſecute Men for Conſcience Sake: And he carried this implacable Spirit with him wherever he went, Acts xxii. 4. *Perſecuting this Way unto the Death, and delivering into Priſon, both Men, and Women*; ſo that he ſpared neither Age, nor Sex, but *impriſoned, and beat, in every Synagogue, them that believed*, ℣. 19; *And when they were put to Death, gave his Voice againſt them; and, being exceedingly mad againſt them, perſecuted them even unto ſtrange Cities*, Acts xxvi. 10, 11.

And how *injurious* was he in all this? Thus to lord it over the Eſtates, and Perſons, and Lives, and Conſciences, of his honeſt Neighbours, who could not go his Lengths, and conform to his Rites and Ceremonies. What Right had he to poſſeſs, or imbezzle, the Eſtates of his diſſenting Neighbours? Who could give him Power over their Perſons, and Lives, that did not agree with him in the Form, and Modes of Worſhip? 'Tis an amazing Guilt to take away the Liberty, and Lives, of Men, that are otherwiſe honeſt, and good Subjects, as though they had forfeited the common Rights of Mankind, and their very Being, merely becauſe they differ from others in their Faith, or diſſent from them in the Circumſtantials of Religion, while yet they may agree with them in the Eſſentials. This is at once to get into the Throne of God, and give Law to Conſcience, and to ſtrip the human Nature of its trueſt Glory, as reaſonable, and religious, and put out that Candle of the Lord,

which

which he hath lighted up in the Breaſt of every Man. Yet thus was *Saul* a ravening Wolf, devouring the Sheep of Chriſt, and a vile Murderer, while he vainly thought he did God good Service.

But now let us turn to the bright Part of the Character of this wonderful Man, and behold! notwithſtanding all the Fury, and Madneſs, the Impiety, and Unrighteouſneſs, we have ſeen him guilty of, even this notoriouſly wicked *Saul* became an eminently holy *Paul*; the Wolf is turned into a Lamb, and the grand Enemy of Chriſt, and common Peſt of his Neighbours, at length, is made a real Convert, a glorious Inſtance of the ſovereign, and rich, and powerful, Grace of God, a zealous Preacher of that Jeſus, and a bold Defender, and warm Cheriſher of thoſe Chriſtians, whom but a little before, he ſo furiouſly perſecuted. We have a particular Account of the extraordinay Manner of his Converſion, in the *Ninth Chapter* of the *Acts*: While he was yet breathing out Threatning, and Slaughter, againſt the Diſciples of the Lord, and was approached, in his Zeal, near to *Damaſcus*, the deſigned Seat of his Action, Acts ix. 3, 4, 5, 6. *Suddenly there ſhined round about him a Light from Heaven; and he fell to the Earth, and heard a Voice ſaying to him*, Saul, Saul, *why perſecuteſt thou me? And he ſaid, Who art thou Lord? And the Lord ſaid unto him, I am Jeſus whom thou perſecuteſt: And he trembling, and aſtoniſhed, ſaid, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do!* After which we find Chriſt ſaying of him to *Ananias*, ℣. 15. *He is a choſen Veſſel unto me, to bear my Name before the Gentiles, and Kings, and the Children of Iſrael.* And now, how fervent a Preacher of Chriſt did he become? At *Jeruſalem*, and every where, among *Jews*, and *Gentiles*, he proved that Jeſus was, indeed, the Chriſt, the ancient promiſed *Meſſiah*; and travelled far, and wide, by Sea, and Land, and with many Arguments, exhorted, and perſwaded Men, to *turn from their*

their Vanities, to the living God; and though he had been brought up at the Feet of *Gamaliel*, and was well read in all the Learning of the *Jews*, yet he *determined to know nothing, ſave Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified*, 1 Cor. ii. 2. Yea, *he counted all but Loſs for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus*, Phil. iii. 8. And ſo unwearied was he in his Labours, in the Goſpel, that he could ſay, even when he was humbly acknowledging himſelf as nothing, 1 Cor. xv. 10. *I laboured more abundantly than they all.*

How ſurpriſing alſo were the Sufferings of this great, and good Man, in that very Cauſe of Chriſt for which he had formerly made ſo many Sufferers? He was no ſooner entered upon the Work of the Goſpel Miniſtry, but they laid wait for him, and ſought to kill him; and throughout all his Travels, we find Bonds, and Afflictions abide him, at *Jeruſalem*, at *Lyſtra*, at *Iconium*, at *Philippi*, &c. ſo that he could give this Account of himſelf, 2 Cor. xi. 23. *In Labours more abundant, in Stripes above Meaſure, in Priſons more frequent, in Death oft; of the Jews five Times received I forty Stripes, ſave one; thrice was I beaten with Rods, once was I ſtoned, thrice I ſuffered Shipwreck, a Night, and a Day, I have been in the Deep*, &c. And yet none of theſe Things moved him, nor did he count his Life dear to him, ſo that he might finiſh his Courſe with Joy, and the Miniſtry which he had received of the Lord Jeſus.

Since then we plainly ſee, in ſuch remarkable Inſtances, that ſome of the greateſt, and chiefeſt of Sinners, have been converted, and ſaved, this ſtrongly argues the Poſſibility there is, that any, and every other Sinner may, in like Manner, experience the regenerating Grace of God, and be ſaved. The Apoſtle *Paul* takes Notice of his own Converſion, as an illuſtrious Specimen, Encouragement, and Earneſt, of what other Sinners might poſſibly

poſſibly obtain. 1 *Tim.* i. 16. *For this Cauſe*, (ſaid he) *I obtained Mercy, that, in me, Jeſus Chriſt might, firſt, ſhew forth all Longſuffering, for a Pattern to them which ſhould hereafter believe on him, to Life everlaſting.* This is a mighty Encouragement to every Sinner, let his paſt Crimes be what they will, to hope, that he is not out of the Reach of Mercy, and to ſtrive that, if by any Means, he alſo may be converted, and ſaved, by Faith in Jeſus Chriſt; ſeeing that, in this great *Apoſtle*, he has ſuch a clear Evidence, and Inſtance, of the Poſſibility of his own Salvation.

Theſe Things may ſuffice to confirm the Second Head, and ſhew the Poſſibility of periſhing Sinners being ſaved. I ſhould now go on to the Third general Head, viz.

To ſhew you, that periſhing Sinners muſt know, and Practiſe, all that is neceſſary in Order to their Salvation; or, there is ſomething to be done, by them, that they may be ſaved. But I chooſe to cloſe the preſent Diſcourſe with a few brief Reflections.

USE 1. Oh! How much is the Grace of our God to be forever admired by us! Is there a Poſſibility that periſhing Sinners may be ſaved; and thou, O poor Sinner, among them? Is God ready, and willing to confer his Grace upon thee; to pardon all thy Sins, and bring thee ſafe to Heaven? And will thou not then ſhout forth Grace! Grace! Grace! unto our good God, that he has had ſuch Thoughts of Kindneſs towards thee?

Did not the Almighty, at firſt, form us noble Creatures, holy and upright? and had he not an undoubted Right to all our Services? Yet, inſtead of ſerving our God, have we not rebelled againſt him, and rebelled againſt our own Reaſon, and brought Miſery, and Ruin, upon ourſelves? Might not God juſtly ſay of us, as of his People of old, Hoſ. xiii. 9. *O Iſrael, thou haſt deſtroyed thy ſelf*? Yet,

after

after all our Rebellions, and all our Self-Deſtructions, is there a Poſſibility that we may be delivered from this Death? May we yet be numbered amongſt the Children of God, and Heirs of Salvation, in the heavenly World?

Is all our Help to be found in God himſelf, whom we have ſo greatly offended? Has he, in infinite Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, contrived the whole Deſign, and by his mighty Power effected it, in ſuch a Way as is to the Aſtoniſhment of Men, and Angels? Could we merit this Favour at the Hands of God, when we were ſo deeply guilty before him, and ſo fixed in our Enmity againſt him? Or doth God forbear to execute his Threatning upon us, becauſe he feareth us, or hopeth for any Reward from us?

Has ſuch Favour been ſhewed to fallen Angels, as to offer unto them Terms of Pardon, and Salvation? Hath not God choſen to paſs them by, and ſuffer them to remain Devils, fixed in their Enmity againſt him, and under unavoidable Damnation?

But to thee, O periſhing Sinner, hath he opened the Treaſures of his Grace, diſcovered the tender Compaſſions of his yearning Bowels; and, in his diſtinguiſhing Love, ſent his own Son to die for thee, and, even now, ſtandeth at the Door of thy Soul, with outſtretched Arms, inviting thy Return to him, that, of an Heir of Death, and Hell, thou mighteſt be made an Heir of Life, and Glory?

Oh! How oughteſt thou, then, to ſee, and admire, and praiſe, this marvellous Grace of God, manifeſted to thee? and to be encouraged, from the Proſpect of it, to reſolve, from this Time, to return to thy firſt Husband, the God that made thee, and cleave unto him forever? And has any Sinner, here, taſted that the Lord is gracious, and perceived the Sweets of the Divine Loving-kindneſs, in renewing, and pardoning of him?

How

How ought ſuch a Soul, in an holy Tranſport of Thankfulneſs, and Praiſe, to ſay with holy *Paul*, Eph. i. 6, 7. *It is to the Praiſe of the Glory of his Grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved; in whom we have Redemption, through his Blood, the Forgiveneſs of our Sins, according to the Riches of his Grace.*

2. Hence ſee, That no Sinner has any juſt Reaſon to deſpair of Mercy. There is a Poſſibility of periſhing Sinners being ſaved; The Grace of God, the Death of Chriſt, the Offers of the Goſpel, the many Inſtances on ſacred Record, all plainly declare this; and therefore thou, O Sinner, whoever thou art, mayeſt poſſibly ſhare in this Bleſſedneſs. Art thou particularly excluded, by Name, from the Offers of Salvation? Search the Scriptures, ſee; where doeſt thou find the Exception? No; no; Thou art as certainly included within the Compaſs of offered Mercy, as if thou wert expreſly mentioned.

Art thou utterly unworthy that God ſhould ſhew ſuch Favour to thee, as to forgive thy Sins, renew thy Nature, and ſave thee? why; ſo were all that ever have been ſaved before thee.

Haſt thou been a very great Sinner? Have thy Sins been greatly multiplied, and highly aggravated? and art thou affraid that there is no Room, for thee, in the pardoning, ſaving Mercy, of our God? why; have thy Sins exceed *Lot*'s, and *Noah*'s, and *David*'s, or *Manaſſeh*'s, and *Peter*'s, or *Paul*'s, and the *Jaylor*'s? Whoſe Sins were againſt greater Light, and ſtronger Bonds, and more provoking, than ſome of the Saints recorded in the holy Scriptures? Let thy Sins be what they will, red like Scarlet, and deep dyed as Crimſon, yet the Grace of God, and the Blood of Chriſt, are ſufficient to cleanſe thee from them all. Iſa. i. 18. *Come now, let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord, though your*

Sins be as Scarlet, they ſhall be as white as Snow; though they be red like Crimſon, they ſhall be as Wool.

Take, therefore, the Encouragement, O Sinner, which the Poſſibility of thy being ſaved giveth thee, and hearken not to the Temptations of the Devil, or Suggeſtions of thy own Heart, to ſlight the Kindneſs of God unto thee, to deſpair of his Mercy, or turn the Grace of God into Wantonneſs, but be up, and doing, and the Lord be with thee.

3. Hence ſee, That, if any of you miſs of Salvation, the Fault will be intirely your own. It is poſſible you may, great Sinners as you are, after all your repeated Tranſgreſſions, and often Refuſal of the offered Mercy of God, yet, 'tis poſſible, you may be converted, and pardoned, and eternally ſaved. If, therefore, any of you, at laſt, come ſhort of the Reſt remaining for the People of God, where will the Blame of all lie, but at your own Doors? God has entertained the gracious Deſign of ſaving you; He has ſent his Son into the World, to purchaſe Salvation for you; He makes the free, and full, Tender of Salvation to you; He ſends his Miniſters, as Embaſſadors for Chriſt, to court you into a Compliance with his offered Grace; He ſets before you the Inſtances of other Sinners, great, and vile, as yourſelves, who have fought, and obtained Salvation; and, moreover, ſends down his *Holy Spirit* to accompany the preaching of his Word, and aſſiſt you in working out your own Salvation: ſo that if, after all this Coſt, and Pains, you miſs of Salvation, youwill have none to blame, but yourſelves. Chriſt will ſay to you, as to the unbelieving *Jews*, in his Day, Joh. v. 40. *Ye will not come unto me, that ye may have Life.* If you periſh, it will be becauſe you will not do, what you can do, to promote, and ſecure, your own Salvation, and not becauſe you cannot ſave yourſelves. So that God, and his Throne, will

will be faultleſs forever, in your eternal Damnation; and your Blood, the Blood of your Souls, will be upon your own Heads. Oh! what a terrible Aggravation will this be, of the Miſery of every impenitent Sinner, that periſheth from under the Goſpel, to think, when he ſhall come into the Place of Torment, that he has brought all of this Miſery upon himſelf; and, Fool that he was, when he might, he would not be ſaved from it!

4. Oh! Let this, now, be the hearty Cry of every Soul, here preſent, *what muſt I do to be ſaved?* It is yet poſſible, O Sinner, through the tender Mercy of the moſt High, that thou mayeſt be ſaved. It is yet a Day of Grace with thee; God is waiting upon thee, with much Patience; but no Man alive can ſay, how long this Poſſibility will laſt. It is certain, that when once Death hath done it's Office upon thee, and fetched thy Soul, out of thy Body, to appear before thy Judge, it will be no longer poſſible for thee to make thy Peace with God, if thou haſt not done it before. The preſent Time, in this World, is thy only working Time; if once this Day be over with thee, the Night of Death will put and End to thy Labour, and all thy Advantages, and Opportunities, will be loſt, and gone forever. Hence the *Preacher* adviſed, Eccl. ix. 10. *Whatſoever thy Hand findeth to do, do it with thy Might; for there is no Work,---- in the Grave, whither thou goeſt.* If thou ſhouldeſt fooliſhly neglect to mind thy eternal Intereſt, and to do all that is proper for thee to do for thy Salvation, until Death, and Judgment, overtake thee, it will be in vain for thee, then, to cry, Oh! *what muſt I do to be ſaved!* Thou mayeſt then, indeed, be forced to roar out, Oh! I am loſt! I am undone! I am damned! but thou wilt not be able to do any thing to deliver thyſelf from the Place of Torment: it will be all too late for thee, then, to ſeek the Bleſſing, though thou

ſhouldeſt be ever ſo much in an Agony, and ſhed ever ſo many Tears about it.

And who is there of you can tell, how ſoon, or ſuddenly, Death may come upon him, and ſeal up his Hands from this important Work? A few Years, yea, a few Days, nay, a few Minutes, for ought thou canſt tell, may finiſh thy Courſe of Probation, and irrecoverably fix thee in the State of Retribution. Thou mayeſt be dead, and damned, before to Morrow: and it may properly be ſaid to thee, as *Michal* to *David*, 1 Sam. xix. 11. *If thou ſave not thy ſelf to Night, to Morrow thou ſhalt be ſlain.*

Oh! Then, let no Sinner be unconcerned about ſo important an Affair, leſt he ſadly repent his Folly, when it ſhall be too late to correct his Error; but now, while he may, let it be the ſerious Enquiry of every Soul, *What muſt I do to be ſaved?* And diligently ſet yourſelves to the immediate Performance, of all that is neceſſary for you to do, in Order thereunto. Now is God's Time, Oh, let it be yours alſo, leſt it ſhould be no longer poſſible for you to obtain Mercy. I conclude, at preſent, with thoſe awful Words, Heb. iii. 15, 18. *While it is ſaid, to Day if ye will hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts, as in the Provocation:---- to whom ſwear he that they ſhould not enter into his Reſt? but to them that believed not.*

SERMON

Salvation is not solely in a Sinner's own Power.

SERMON VII.

ACTS XVI. 30.

And said, Sirs, What must I do to be saved?

THESE Words are expressive of the very great Concern of the *Jaylor*, at *Philippi*, about what was necessary for him to do, in Order to his being saved: he saw it was necessary that something should be done, or he must perish; and he was very solicitous to know, and do, what was requisite, to obtain the Pardon of his Sins, and the Salvation of his Soul. Herein he acted like a wise Man; and what was his great Concern ought to be ours. The Doctrine, which therefore I have laid down agreeable to the Intendment of these Words, was,

Doc. It is of the highest Concernment to perishing Sinners, to be very solicitous, what they shall do to be saved; or, to know, and practise, all that is

neceſſary in Order to their Salvation. I have propoſed, by Divine Help, to ſpeak to this Text, and Doctrine, under theſe Four General Heads. viz.

I. To ſhew you what it is to be ſaved; or, what is that Salvation which periſhing Sinners ſtand in Need of.

II. That periſhing Sinners may be ſaved; there is a Poſſibility, notwithſtanding their preſent miſerable Condition, that they may be eternally ſaved.

III. That periſhing Sinners muſt know, and practice, all that is neceſſary, in Order to their Salvation; there is ſomething to be done, by them, that they may be ſaved.

IV. This is a Matter of the higheſt Concernment to them, and therefore they ought to be moſt ſeriouſly ſolicitous about it.

I have heretofore ſomewhat diſtinctly ſpoken to the Firſt, and Second of theſe Heads; and ſhewed you that the Sinner's Salvation conſiſteth in a Deliverance from Moral, and Penal Evil, and in the Poſſeſſion of all that is truly Good: and, the laſt Opportunity, I ſhewed you the Poſſibility of it, that periſhing Sinners, thoſe who are as yet the capable Subjects of the Divine Mercy, may obtain Salvation. The Sovereignty, and Riches, of the Grace and Mercy of God, the great End of the Incarnation, and Death of Jeſus Chriſt, the whole Tenor of the Goſpel Offer, and the many Inſtances, upon ſacred Record, do all moſt plainly evidence the Poſſibility of the Sinner's Salvation. I ſhall now, by Divine Aſſiſtance, proceed to the Conſideration of the Third Thing propoſed. viz.

III. That periſhing Sinners muſt know, and practiſe, all that is neceſſary, in order to their Salvation: or there is ſomething to be done, by them,

them, that they may be ſaved. *What muſt I do to be ſaved?* ſaid the *Jaylor*. It fully ſpeaketh the Neceſſity that ſomething muſt be done. Natural Conſcience told him that he muſt do ſomething, or periſh; he was ſenſible he muſt be himſelf active, if he would be ſaved; and therefore is very ſolicitous to know what he muſt do, that he might do it. *What muſt I do?*

It is true, the infinitely great and good God has done marvellous Things, for the Recovery of poor ſinful Man from the deplorable Circumſtances he has plunged himſelf into, and bring him into an happy State. The moſt tender Compaſſions of the Deity have been exerciſed toward him, and God is loth to ſee Sinners periſh; He has, in infinite Wiſdom, contrived the intricate, and amazing, Scheme of a guilty Sinner's eſcaping Puniſhment, with a proper Salvo to his injured Authority, and Rectitude; His boundleſs Power has effected the grand Deſign, in the wondrous Method of ſending his own Son, to offer a Sacrifice of Atonement for Sin, and, by his own Arm, to deſtroy all the miſchievous Devices of the evil One, and work out Salvation for them; and by ſending his *Holy Spirit* to apply the Benefits of the Death of Chriſt unto them.

But, though the whole work is of God, both as to the effectual Impetration, and Application, of our Salvation, yet, there is ſomething for us, to do, in our own Perſons, that we may be ſaved. What muſt *I do*, ſaid the *Jaylor*. There is ſomething requiſite to be done, on our Part, as well as on God's Part. The wiſe God does not mean to deal with us as though we were mere Machines, but he treateth us as we are, rational Agents, (who only are capable of Salvation,) and requireth of us, as ſuch, that we be *active*, and not merely *paſſive*, in the great Work of ſecuring our own Happineſs. However *paſſive* we may be in the

Divine Majeſty's conferring of his Grace, and Favour, upon us, that incorruptible Seed, by which we are begotten unto God; (and, indeed, we can be no other than *paſſive* in the Divine Gifts, becauſe we cannot give them to ourſelves;) yet muſt we be *active*, in our ſeeking it, receiving it, and improving of it, that we may be ſaved.

Let no Man be ſo weak, as, from hence, to argue, that the Sinner can ſave himſelf, by any Strength, and Power, purely, his own. For as the original Deſign, ſo the whole Power, and Efficacy, is all from God, who *worketh all our works in us*; Iſa. xxvi. 12. and to whom alone belongeth all the Glory. Nevertheleſs the Sinner muſt not think to lie wholly idle, and imagine that there is nothing for him to do, becauſe he cannot do all; but he muſt beſtir himſelf in the Uſe of Means, and diligently employ himſelf, in thoſe various Methods, which the Wiſdom of God has ſeen meet to appoint, as the ordinary Way of obtaining Salvation.

We may illuſtrate this by a familiar Inſtance in the natural Life. It is the Lord alone that is the *God of our Life, and the Length of our Days*: Deut. xxx. 20. He firſt giveth Life, and Being, to us, and then lengtheneth out our Life to what Duration he pleaſeth, ſo that no Man can paſs one Moment beyond the Bounds which are ſet to him; and it is the Bleſſing of God, concurring to, and with, all Means, that maketh them any Ways inſtrumental, either to produce us into Being, or ſupport us in Life, without which we ſhould never have drawn one Breath, nor could we ſubſiſt one Moment. And yet the Man muſt not be wholly unconcerned, and inactive, about his own Preſervation, but he muſt do his Part to feed, and nouriſh, and defend himſelf; and unleſs he will be at Pains, about theſe, he can, upon no ſolid Principles, Phyſical, or Moral, expect to have his

Life

Life continued. For, though God can ſupport the humane Body, in a miraculous Way, for what Length he pleaſeth, without Food; as he did *Moſes*, who was forty Days, and forty Nights, in the Mount with God, and *did neither eat Bread, nor drink Water*; Exod. xxxiv. 28. yet we have no Reaſon, either from the View of our Nature, or from any Encouragement that he has given us, to expect that God will take any extraordinary Methods to preſerve us, when ordinary Ones are at Hand, and we are ſo fooliſh as not to improve them.

So is the Caſe here: It is God only who, by his Almighty Power, can make a dead Soul to live; it is his Energy, and Bleſſing, upon the Means, which maketh them efficacious, and quickening, to beget us again unto himſelf, and to a lively Hope of eternal Life; and no Power, ſeparate from God, will be effectual to make us ſpiritually alive, or to maintain the Divine Life in us, unto Salvation. But yet the Sinner, as a rational Agent, muſt put his Hand unto the Work, and diligently attend to the ordinary Means of Converſion, and Salvation, and carefully perform the Duties required, on his Part, or he may not expect to partake of the Divine Life, or have any Right to the Salvation of God. For God will ſave no Man againſt his Will, and conſequently not without his Labour, and Pains; for he that is not willing to be at the Pains to take the Methods, appointed, leading unto Salvation, (though there ſhould be no ſuch neceſſary Connection between them, as that he that uſeth the Means could not poſſibly miſs of the End, but only a fair Probability that in this Way he might be ſaved;) he evidently manifeſteth, that he had rather go without Salvation, than give himſelf the Trouble of doing what is proper to obtain it; and therefore ſheweth that he is not heartily willing to be ſaved.

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Upon the true ſtating of this Point, I ſuppoſe, the Goſpel Methods of Salvation very much turn; and the want of a due Obſervation hereof, is, perhaps, the great Reaſon, why ſome, on the one Hand, aſcribe all to the Power of Man, and ſo rob God of his true Glory; and others, on the other Hand, ſo aſcribe all unto God, as to leave Man no Power to do any Thing in working out his own Salvation: both of which ſett of Principles, if acted upon, in Contradiſtinction to each other, are equally diſhonourable to God, and deſtructive to the Souls of Men; whereas, while they go Hand in Hand, by allowing unto God, the Things that are God's, and unto Man, the Things that are Man's, they ſweetly conſpire to ſhew forth the Divine Glory, and ſecure our own real Happineſs. I ſhall therefore,

[I.] Shew you, That the Sinner cannot ſave himſelf, merely by the Virtue, Power, and Efficacy, of all that he can do. And yet,

[II.] That it is abſolutely neceſſary that the Sinner do ſomething, in order to his own Salvation.

[I.] The Sinner cannot ſave himſelf, merely by the Virtue, Power, and Efficacy, of all that he can do. After all that the Sinner can poſſibly do, towards his own Salvation, yet, as the original Deſign is from the Grace of God, ſo the Efficacy is all from the Power of God, and not from the Man himſelf. For we are *born not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Fleſh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God*, Joh. i. 13.

It was poſſible, indeed, unto Man, in his State of Innocency, to have ſecured his own Happineſs, by his own Power; that is, by the common Concurrence of the Providence of God with his natural Powers, or thoſe Powers which God had furniſhed him with as ſuch a Creature; becauſe his Strength was proportioned to that State he was in,

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and was every Way ſufficient to perform that Duty which his Maker required of him. For it may not be ſuppoſed that an infinitely wiſe, and righteous, and good God ſhould require more of his Creature, which he had juſt made, and which had not yet, in any Thing, offended him, than it was capable of performing; and yet, for want of performing what was abſolutely out of it's Power to do, turn it out of his Favour, and make it a miſerable Creature, by a poſitive Act of his own ſentencing of him thereto. The Perfections of God, as well as Divine Revelation, aſſure us, that all the Works of God, as they firſt came out of his Hands, were very good; and conſequently, that Man was made perfect in his Kind, not only in his Body, but in the Purity, and Vigour, of his Mind, which was the Divine Image upon him.

But the Caſe is greatly altered with fallen Man; for beſide the Guilt which he has contracted by the Fall, (which I have formerly obſerved is juſtly chargeable upon all his Poſterity,) the Moment the firſt Man ſinned he loſt his original Rectitude, and his Nature then became polluted, and impure; and, I think, there is no Room to queſtion the Communication of this Impurity unto all his natural Deſcendants, (as I have ſhewed,) becauſe he could communicate no other Nature, to them, than that which he had. And becauſe the humane Nature, as lapſed, is become tainted, and defiled, therefore, of Conſequence, it has loſt it's original Strength, and Vigour, and there is a moral Weakneſs, and Impotency, upon it; partly, from the Darkneſs upon the Mind, and partly, from the Prejudices upon the Will, and Affections, ariſing from the Depravation which Sin has brought upon them; and from hence, the Man is, now, whatever he was at firſt, incapable of yeilding an Obedience, as extenſive, and perfect, as the Law of God requireth; and yet if he fail,

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in the leaſt Tittle, of living up to the whole of his Duty, he will loſe his End, and miſs of Happineſs; unleſs a Diſpenſation of Grace relieve him. Nor is there any Injury done to Man, or any Injuſtice in God, in the Demands of an Obedience which Man is not, now, able, of himſelf, to perform; becauſe the Rights of the Divine Authority, and the Demands of the Law, remain unalterably the ſame; that is to ſay, God always was, and always will be, our Sovereign Lord, while we have any Being, and it is always due to him, and to his Law, to be obeyed perfectly, without any Defect. The Relief which God hath graciouſly provided for lapſed Man, that his Condition might not be altogether hopeleſs, and what rendereth it a Diſpenſation of Grace, is, that he is ready to receive us to his Favour, and beſtow the Bleſſing upon us, upon the Conſideration of what a Surety has done, and ſuffered, to merit the Divine Favour for us, (whoſe Merits became ours by our Compliance with ſuch and ſuch propoſed Terms,) and his providing, and offering, ſupernatural Strength, to enable us to come up to the Terms propoſed. This is all the Grace that is needed by a fallen Creature, who has greatly weakened, tho' not left, the Powers of Reaſon; and leaveth him to act the rational Part, in the diligent Uſe of Means, to ſecure his own Happineſs, at the ſame Time that it ſhews him, a Sufficiency herefor is not of himſelf.

To him that now, ſince the Fall, expecteth to be ſaved by his own Performances, Two Things are requiſite, namely, That there be ſomething of Merit, in his good Deeds, to make Amends for his former Offences; and that he has ſufficient Power, within himſelf, to live up to the whole Law, in the utmoſt Perfection of Obedience, for the future: both of which are wanting to the Sinner, which makes it impoſſible for him to be

ſaved,

ſaved, by any Virtue, Power, and Efficacy, purely his own. For

1. There can be nothing of Merit in all that a Sinner can poſſibly do, by which to make Amends for any paſt Offences. He that has treſpaſſed upon the Divine Law, but in any one Inſtance, has, by ſo doing, made a Forfeiture of all that Happineſs he was a Candidate for, and incurred the Diſpleaſure of his Sovereign; and therefore, in Order to his eſcaping Puniſhment, and having any juſt Claim to his forfeited Happineſs, it is abſolutely neceſſary that there be ſomething, either his own, or another's made his, that ſhall be meritorious; that is, ſhall be of ſufficient Worth, and Value, in Conſideration whereof it will be an Act of Juſtice, as well as Mercy, in God, to overlook his Guilt, and be reconciled to him; otherwiſe the Penalty of the violated Law will unavoidably take Place upon him, and render his Condition miſerable. Now, this is moſt certainly the Caſe of every individual Child of *Adam*, naturally deſcending from him, that he is become *guilty before God*, for ſo *the whole World is*; Rom. iii. 19.

Let us then ſuppoſe that this guilty Creature ſhould yield the moſt perfect Obedience to the Divine Law, even to the leaſt Tittle, for the Time to come, and this accompanied with his deepeſt Sorrow for his paſt Offences, yet, it is evident, that it is utterly impoſſible there ſhould be any Thing of Merit in all this; and that for this plain Reaſon; becauſe, in the utmoſt Perfection of ſuch his Obedience, he would but do what the Divine Law ever requireth of him, and ſo only perform a preſent Duty; and becauſe the greateſt Exactneſs of Obedience is but a preſent Duty, therefore there can be nothing meritorious in it, to expiate, and wipe off, a former Crime. Hence our Saviour taught his Diſciples, *Luk.* xvii. 10. *When ye have done all theſe Things which are commanded*

manded you, ſay, we are unprofitable Servants, we have done that which was our Duty to do. He that pays for a preſent Purchaſe, cannot diſcharge a former Bond by it: nor he that doth a preſent Duty, by it, make Amends for a former Tranſgreſſion. Therefore the moſt critical, and exact, Obedience will not attone for our paſt Offences. Hence it is that the ſacred Scripture aſſureth us, Rom. iii. 20. *By the Deeds of the Law, there ſhall no Fleſh be juſtified in his Sight; for by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin.* And as for his deepeſt Sorrow, this is no more than is agreeable to his rational Nature, to be ſo affected at the Sight of having done a wrong Thing, but is no Amends to his Sovereign for his having violated his Commands.

So that no Man can be ſaved by the Efficacy of his own Deeds, as to any Thing meritorious in them. All the Merit of a Sinner's being juſtifyed, accepted, and ſaved, is from the incarnate Son of God alone, who hath *given his Life a Ranſon for many*, that by his once offering himſelf to his eternal Father, he might purchaſe the Forgiveneſs of Sins, and our final Acceptance with God: for, *we are made accepted in the Beloved; in whom we have Redemption, through his Blood, even the Forgiveneſs of Sins.* Eph. i. 6, 7. So that the meritorious Cauſe of the Sinner's Salvation, is, not from himſelf, but from God, who hath provided the Sacrifice of his Son for us, and graciouſly accepteth the penitent Believer to Favour, and Life, upon the alone Account thereof. And this being ſuch a wondrous Act of Grace in God, towards a rebel Creature, as is to the juſt Admiration of Men, and Angels, gives the Denomination of *a Covenant of Grace*, to the Tranſactions between God, and Man, conſidered in the Mediator ſo graciouſly provided for us, and aſcribeth the whole Glory of our Salvation to the infinitely free, and rich, Grace of our God.

2. The

2. The Sinner hath not ſufficient Strength, and Power, of his own, to perform the whole Will of God. Upon Suppoſition, that a Man's living up to the whole Law, with the greateſt Exactneſs, were truly meritorious, and were ſufficient to make Atonement for a former Tranſgreſſion, (which I have ſhewed it is not,) yet, ſtill it would not be poſſible for any Sinner to be ſaved by all that he can do ; becauſe he has not Strength and Power enough, of his own, to perform the Will of God, and obſerve the Divine Law, in the full Extent of it, and without all Defect, and Interruption.

For, do but conſider what it is that the Law of God requireth of us, even a ſinleſs Perfection in our Obedience, and that to every *Iota* ; that we carefully perform every Duty to God, and to our Neighbour, and ourſelves ; that our Actions, and Words, and Thoughts, and all of them, be kept under the ſtricteſt Government of the Divine Commands ; that our Hearts and Souls, be engaged in our Obedience, as well as our Bodies ; and that we act, in all, from a conſcientious Regard to the Authority of God ; that we conſtantly intend the Glory of God, as the ultimate End of all we do ; and that we patiently ſubmit to all the Diſpoſals of Divine Providence, though ever ſo Croſs to our worldly Intereſt, and Views, and our preſent Eaſe, without the leaſt Murmuring, or Heart-riſing againſt what we meet withal ; and that we do all of this always, as long as we live, and that without the leaſt Failure, or Interruption, in any Part of our Duty : And conſider alſo, how much of Darkneſs we evidently perceive to be upon our Minds ; how many Errors, and Miſtakes, we are liable to, through the Ignorance that is in us ; and what a ſtrong Bias, and Propenſity of Inclination, there are upon us, to pleaſe, and gratify Self, in innumerable Inſtances, which are contrary unto the holy Laws of God ; and how much

this

this Bias is improved, and ſtrengthened, by the many Temptations that ſurround us; I ſay, do but conſider, how extenſive the Law is, and what Weakneſs is brought upon the Humane Nature, by the Fall, beſides what the Man bringeth upon himſelf, by his early contracting the Habits of Vice, before he begins ſeriouſly to think of ſaving his Soul, and ſay now, *Who is ſufficient for theſe Things*? Where is the Man that is capable of performing the whole Will of God? What Strength, what Power is there left in the fallen Creature to obey the Divine Law, univerſally, conſtantly, uninterruptedly? Whatever Man might have done, in his State of Innocency, it is certain, the Principles of Rebellion contracted by his Apoſtacy from God, have ſtripped him of his Power, for a Life of compleat Obedience, have blinded his Mind, biaſſed his Will, and Affections, and defiled his Conſcience, and ſo rendered him *carnally minded, at Enmity againſt God, and not ſubject unto his Law, nor indeed can he be*, Rom. viii. 7. until there is a Change wrought in him.

If ever, therefore, the Sinner be ſaved, it muſt be by the Virtue, and Efficacy, of a Power ſuperiour to his own, aſſiſting, and ſtrengthening of him, to overcome his natural corrupt Inclinations, and ſurrounding Temptations, and to yield ſuch an Obedience unto God, as will be pleaſing, and acceptable unto him. God will not ſave any who will not be obedient to him, (as I ſhall ſhew hereafter,) but then, That he hath pleaſed to make any Abatements of the rigorous Demands of the Law, and to furniſh the Sinner with ſufficient Power, to yield that Obedience which he, now, inſiſteth upon, all turneth upon a Covenant of Grace; wherein there is full Proviſion, by the Influences of the Death of Chriſt, and ſpecial Operation of the *Holy Spirit*, to enable the Man to perform an Evangelical, that is to ſay, a ſincere,

cere, and hearty Obedience unto God; which is what the Divine Majesty, under the Gospel Dispensation, requireth of him, instead of an universally perfect Obedience, which is the strict Demand of the Law. Hence the *Apostle* says, Rom. v. 6. *When we were without Strength, Christ died for the ungodly:* and, *we are not, of ourselves, sufficient to think any Thing as of ourselves, but our Sufficiency is of God.* 2 Cor. iii. 5. Hence the Prophet *Isaiah*, speaking of Gospel Times, and the gathering of the Gentiles into the Church, says, Isa. xl. 29. *He giveth Power to the faint; and to them that have no Might, he increaseth Strength.* Hence also, you find, in the sacred Scriptures, the great Works of Conversion, and Salvation, ascribed to the mighty Power of God alone, even to that Power which created the World, and can raise the Dead. Therefore the preaching of the Gospel is said to be, Rom. i. 16. *The Power of God unto the Salvation of every one that believeth*; and we are said to be, Eph. ii. 10. *The Workmanship of God, created, in Christ Jesus, unto good Works*; and we read, *of the exceeding Greatness of his Power, to us ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty Power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the Dead.* Eph. i. 19, 20.

Since therefore the Sinner, when he has done his best, cannot merit any Thing at the Hands of God, and has not sufficient Strength, of his own, to perform the whole Divine Law, it followeth, that it is impossible he should be saved by the Virtue, Efficacy, and Power, of his own Performances: his Salvation doth not result from himself, but from the sovereign and rich, Grace, and the mighty, and efficacious, Power, of God. Rom. ix. 16. *It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God, who sheweth Mercy.*

Before I proceed any farther, let us make a few

Reflections on what has been obſerved, under this Head.

USE. 1. This teacheth us the very great Danger there is in depending upon our own Works, as meriting any Thing at the Hands of God. Since there can be nothing of Merit in all that Man can do, therefore for any to place their Truſt in any Works of their own, as meritorious, will be but to lean upon a bruiſed Reed, which will certainly deceive them; and to build their Houſe, their Hope of Salvation, upon a ſandy Foundation, which will not endure the Trial. Beſides, for a Man to depend upon his own Works, as meriting any Thing for him, will be to diſclaim the crucified Jeſus, and ſhut his Merits out from having their proper Influence into his Salvation; than which, what can be more contrary to the whole Strain of the Goſpel, as well as diſhonorable to Chriſt? The great Deſign of the Goſpel is, to ſhew us how infinitely we are beholden to Jeſus Chriſt, for his purchaſing Pardon, and Grace, and Life, for us, at the Expence of his own moſt precious Blood. And needs then muſt it be exceeding dangerous for any, thus to fruſtrate the Grace of God, and render the Death of Chriſt, as to them, in vain, by their fond Imagination of their being ſaved by Works of their own. So, *Iſrael hath not attained to the Law of Righteouſneſs; wherefore? becauſe they ſought it, not by Faith, but as it were by the Works of the Law.* Rom. ix. 31, 32. *For they being ignorant of God's Righteouſneſs, and going about to eſtabliſh their own Righteouſneſs, have not ſubmitted themſelves unto the Righteouſneſs of God.* Ch. x. 3. *For if Righteouſneſs come by the Law, then Chriſt is dead in vain.* Gal. ii. 21.

2. This alſo teacheth us the great Folly, and Arrogancy, of thoſe who dream of Works of Supererogation. It is one of the remarkable Inſtances of the Folly, and Pride, of the *Church of Rome,*

Rome, that ſhe teaches her Votaries, that they may lay up a Stock of good Works, over and above what is neceſſary for themſelves, to ſupply the Defects of their Neighbours, who may be leſs exact in their Obedience ; and upon this Foundation, very many of their ſuperſtitious Practices, are built ; as their praying to dead Saints, their Indulgences, and Pardons, and praying Souls out of Purgatory; &c. But how amazing is the Folly, even to Stupidity ! How exceſſive is the Pride ! Nor can I ſee it to be reconcileable to any Principles but theſe Dregs of the *Romiſh Apoſtacy*, for any pretended *Proteſtant* to affirm, that *every true Believer may be called the Lord our Righteouſneſs.* Our Bleſſed Lord hath taught us, that the wiſe Virgins anſwer the Fooliſh, who beg it of them to give them of their Oil, Matth. xxv. 9. *Not ſo, leſt there be not enough for us, and you.* Can a Man have Oil to ſpare ? Can he have Grace enough for himſelf, and others ? Who cannot poſſibly live up to that Perfection, which the Law requireth of him ; and if he could, would merit nothing thereby, for himſelf, much leſs for another.

3. This teacheth us where to place our whole Dependance, and to whom we ſhould go, for Salvation, and where to aſcribe all the Glory of it. *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name be all the Glory.* Not to ourſelves, or an Arm of Fleſh, but to the rich Grace of God, and the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt. It is all from the infinite Grace of God, deſigning, and laying out the Scheme, and perfecting of it, in the Methods of boundleſs Wiſdom, and Love; and the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, *who hath loved us, and waſhed away our Sins, in his own Blood*; and the Efficacy of the Divine Omnipotent *Spirit*, the Fruit of the Grace of God, and Purchaſe of Chriſt, who quickeneth whom he will, and divideth to every Man ſever-

any as he will; that any are converted, and pardoned, and ſaved. And this ſhould put us upon going to this one God, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*, for the Manifeſtation of his Grace to us, in the Workmanſhip of the *Holy Spirit* in us, and Application of the Merits of his Son to us, that we might be the Heirs of the Hope of Life. For whither ſhall we go, but unto him, with whom are the Words of eternal Life? This alſo ſhould direct us to aſcribe unto God the Glory of his Grace, manifeſted towards us in JESUS CHRIST our Lord; ſaying with the *Apoſtle*, Eph. ii. 4---8. *God, who is rich in Mercy, for his great Love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in Treſpaſſes, and Sins, hath quickened us, together with Chriſt;* ---- *that, in Ages to come, He might ſhew the exceeding Riches of his Grace, in his Kindneſs towards us, through Chriſt Jeſus: for, by Grace ye are ſaved, through Faith, and that not of yourſelves, it is the Gift of God.*

Having ſaid theſe Things, to prevent Miſtakes, I now go on, to maintain the Aſſertion; viz.

[II.] That it is abſolutely neceſſary that the Sinner do ſomething, in order to his own Salvation. Though the Sinner cannot be ſaved, merely by the Virtue, Power, and Efficacy, of his own Performances, yet God never deſigned to encourage him in his Sin, by leaving him under the Dominion of Sloth, and Idleneſs, and an inactive Unconcernedneſs, about his Soul, and his eternal Intereſt; as if there were nothing for him to do, but to lie ſtill, contented in his Sin, and Rebellion, againſt his Maker, until it ſhould pleaſe God, by his own almighty Power, and ſovereign Grace, to convert, and ſave him. I know of nothing but a poſitive Divine Command, that could more embolden any Man in his evil Ways, and vindicate, and truly excuſe, him, in his leading a Life of Irreligion, and Debauchery. But is it poſſible

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for the Holy God, who is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity, thus to Countenance Sin, and abet the Sinner, in all his vicious Courſes of Ungodlyneſs, and Unrighteouſneſs? No verily: Nothing is more contradictory to his Nature, and declared Will. And therefore the infinitely wiſe God, who is perfectly well acquainted with the humane Weakneſs, has, nevertheleſs, aſſigned to him, as a rational Agent, a Work to do; and peremptorily demanded it of him, to be active, and diligent, in his Attendance upon it, that he may not finally periſh, through his own Sloth, and Negligence. Thus, He has commanded us, Phil. ii. 12. *to work out our own Salvation, with Fear, and Trembling*: Eccl. ix. 10. *to do with our Might, whatſoever our Hands findeth to do*: Joh. ix. 4. *to work while it is called to Day, e'er the Night come, wherein no Man can work*: and, 2 Pet. i. 10. *to give all Diligence to make our Calling, and Election ſure.* Hither, alſo, look all thoſe Texts, that require it of us, to *run*, to *wreſtle*, to *ſtrive*, to *fight*; that is, they enjoin upon us to uſe utmoſt Diligence, and begrutch no Pains, to obtain the incorruptible, and heavenly Crown. And he reproveth the Sinner's Sloth, and Negligence, ſaying, Matth. xx. 6. *Why ſtand ye, here, all the Day idle?* and pronounces a moſt heavy Doom upon the ſlothful, as a wicked Servant, ſaying, Matth. xxv. 26, 30: *Thou wicked, and ſlothful Servant; caſt ye the unprofitable Servant into outer Darkneſs, there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of Teeth.* All of which plainly ſpeaketh the abſolute Neceſſity of the Sinner's being active, in doing ſomething, in order to his own Salvation. Though he cannot ſave himſelf, by his own Power, or merit Heaven by his own Performances, yet there is ſomething that lieth within his Power, weak as he is; and this he muſt do, as ever he would hope to be ſaved.

And this leads us into the grand Inquiry, *What*

is it that the Sinner muſt do? What is neceſſarily incumbent, on his Part, that he may obtain Salvation?

Now, there are two Things, which comprehend in them all that is required of the Sinner, both of which are plainly included in the Language of the *Jayler, What muſt I do to be ſaved?* It ſpeaks his hearty Deſire to *know* the Way of Salvation, his Willingneſs to be acquainted with his Duty, and his Readineſs to take proper Pains to inform himſelf; and it ſhews alſo his Reſolution to reduce his Knowledge into Practice, and *do* whatſoever he ſhould know to be his Duty to do, in order to the obtaining the Salvation of his Soul. And accordingly the Anſwer to the Enquiry, *What muſt the Sinner do to be ſaved?* lieth in theſe two Words, Knowledge, and Practice: The firſt of which I ſhall particularly conſider in the latter Part of the Day.

SERMON

Knowledge neceſſary to Salvation.

SERMON VIII.

ACTS XVI. 30.

And ſaid, Sirs, What muſt I do to be ſaved?

I Shewed you, in the Forenoon, That the Sinner cannot poſſibly ſave himſelf, becauſe he cannot merit any Thing at the Hands of God, by all that he can do, nor has he ſufficient Strength, and Power, of his own, to perform the whole Will of God. Nevertheleſs it is abſolutely neceſſary that the Sinner do ſomething, in order to his own Salvation. I now proceed to a particular Conſideration of what the Sinner muſt do; namely,

I. The periſhing Sinner muſt know all that is neceſſary to his Salvation.

II. The periſhing Sinner muſt reduce his Knowledge into Practice, and be ready to do all that he ſhall know to be his Duty. I ſhall offer ſome Things to the Firſt of theſe, at this Time: viz.

I. The periſhing Sinner muſt know all that is neceſſary to his Salvation: all that is neceſſary for him to know. And, indeed, our Knowledge of the Things neceſſary unto Salvation, is to be laid in the Foundation, as of our Practice, ſo of our Hopes of being ſaved, proportionable to the Advantages, and Opportunities, which Perſons have of coming at the Knowledge of them. Therefore our future Happineſs is ſometimes repreſented, in the Scriptures, as turning upon our Knowledge: as our Lord ſaid, Joh. xvii. 3. *This is eternal Life, to know thee, the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt, whom thou haſt ſent.* What therefore every Sinner has to do is, to take Pains to inform himſelf, that he may be acquainted with thoſe Things which are neceſſary for him to know. Here then obſerve;

1. There are certain doctrinal Articles to be believed, and Duties to be performed, in order to the Sinner's Salvation. The *Chriſtian Religion*, (and the Method of a Sinner's Salvation contained in it,) doth not conſiſt of any uncertain Principles, or an indigeſted Heap of Articles, and Duties which a Man accidently ſtumbles upon, or which, caſually come into his Mind; nor of ſuch as are purely the Reſult of humane Invention, Inclination, or ſecular Intereſt; but it is a well digeſted Scheme, the Product of infinite Wiſdom, and Underſtanding, and containeth in it certain, and eſtabliſhed Articles, neceſſary to be believed by us, and plain Duties, neceſſary to be practiſed by us, and theſe in order to promote the higheſt, and nobleſt Ends that can be, the Glory, and Honour, of our great Maker, and our own everlaſting Well-Being.

Thus, as Articles of our Faith, the *Chriſtian Religion* containeth in it, the Doctrine of one, only, living, and true God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, infinite, eternal, unchangeable, in his Being, Wiſ-

dom,

dom, Power, Holineſs, Juſtice, Goodneſs, and Truth, the Maker, the Preſerver, and the Ruler of the World. It containeth in it, the Doctrine of Jeſus Chriſt, his being the only begotten Son of God, the promiſed Meſſiah, the Saviour of the World, in the Fulneſs of Time, appearing in the humane Nature, and offering of himſelf unto the eternal Father, a Sacrifice, for the Sin of the World, riſing from the Dead, on the third Day, aſcending up into Heaven, and ſitting at the right Hand of God, making continual Interceſſion for us; and that he will appear a ſecond Time, as the great Judge of the World. It containeth in it, the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, as the principal Agent in the forming of the new Creature, as the Director and Leader, of us in the Paths of Righteouſneſs, and the Beſtower of all Comfort upon us. It containeth in it, the Doctrines of the Reſurrection of the Dead, the final Judgment, and the everlaſting Rewards, and Puniſhments, of the future World. And it containeth in it, the Doctrines of Regeneration, the Neceſſity of the New Birth, of Repentance, and an holy Life, and of the Word, Sabbaths, Sacraments, and Prayer, as the ordinary Means of producing Holineſs of Life in us.

And as it containeth theſe Doctrinal Articles, moſt, if not all, neceſſary to be believed by us, ſo the *Chriſtian Religion* conſiſteth of many Duties, to be performed by us, which may be all comprehended under that general Expreſſion, of *living ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, in this preſent World.* It is the great Deſign of the Goſpel of our Salvation to teach us theſe Articles of Faith, and bring us to the Practice of theſe Duties, and of all that are comprehended in them, and fairly reducible to them.

2. The Knowledge of theſe Doctrines, and Duties, is neceſſary to our being ſaved. The

Sinner's

Sinner's Salvation, (I am ſpeaking of ſuch as live under the Goſpel,) turns upon his Belief of the Goſpel Revelation, and his practiſing the Duties contained in it, ſo far as he has Opportunity, and Occaſion, to attend them; becauſe the Goſpel Revelation is the full, and only, Diſcovery of the Divine Mind in what Way a Sinner may be ſaved: and this plainly telleth us, Mar. xvi. 16. *He that believeth, and is baptiſed, ſhall be ſaved:* and, Rev. xxii. 14. *Bleſſed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have Right to the Tree of Life.*

But, unleſs the Sinner knoweth what the Goſpel requireth him to believe, and do, how can he either believe, or do it? Here, I do not mean, that it is neceſſary unto Savation, that every Perſon ſo know the great Doctrines of the Goſpel, as to be able to unriddle all the Myſteries contained in them, or to be able to anſwer all the Objections, which crafty Men, who are ſubtle to deceive, may poſſibly propound to them; nor yet ſo to know all the Duties of *Chriſtianity*, as to be nice Caſuiſts in every poſſible Difficulty; but it is neceſſary to every one that would be ſaved, to be ſo far acquainted with the great, and main, Articles of the *Chriſtian Religion*, as is requiſite to his firm Belief of all that is eſſential to a true Believer; and with the great Duties of Chriſtianity, as is ſufficient to direct, and govern, his Heart, and Life, by the Rules of Piety, Juſtice, and Temperance. Thus far, I readily acknowledge, our Belief, (and Practice too,) is founded in our Knowledge, and what a Man knoweth nothing of, he cannot believe. But then, this does not neceſſarily intend any more than, that a Man be acquainted with the *Propoſition*, to be believed, and underſtand the *Terms* of it; and it by no Means followeth, that a Man muſt underſtand the *Eſſence*, or *Mode of Exiſtence*, of the Thing

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ſpoken of in the *Propoſition*; or that he ſhould underſtand the *Ratio* of the Truth, or Doctrine, contained in ſuch *Propoſition*, before he believeth the *Propoſition*, which he fully underſtandeth. For Inſtance; I ſhould have all imaginable Reaſon to believe the Truth of this *Propoſition*, whoſe Terms I underſtand, That *the Square of the longeſt Side of a Right-angled Triangle is equal to the Square of the two ſhorter Sides*, when ſeveral Perſons, of approved Integrity, and Skill in the *Methematicks*, tell me it is ſo; though, at the ſame Time, I ſhould be entirely ignorant of the *Ratio* of it, and be uncapable of underſtanding it, for want of a more thorow Acquaintance with the *Mathematicks*. Therefore, to lay this down for a Principle, that *we are to believe nothing but what we underſtand*, meaning thereby, that we muſt not only underſtand the Terms of the Propoſition, but, have a clear Idea, of the *Ratio*, and Nature, of the Thing ſpoken of, is to lay down a very falſe Principle; and it ſheweth the Weakneſs of thoſe that aſſert it, as well as the Weakneſs of all the Structure they build upon it. It is an infallibly true *Propoſition*, That God is; but where is the Maſter of Reaſon that underſtandeth *what* God is? It is an undoubted *Propoſition*, which every Man firmly believeth reſpecting himſelf, *I Exiſt*; but where is the Man that thorowly knoweth his own Nature, or the Manner of his own exiſting? There are, and will be, Myſteries in *Chriſtianity*, as well as in *Nature*, (let Men ſay what they will,) though the Words of the Revelation are perfectly well underſtood, and grammatically put together. And notwithſtanding all the Myſteriouſneſs that there may be in the *Nature*, *Modus*, or *Ratio*, of a Doctrine revealed from Heaven, yet this hindereth not, but that we are bound to believe ſuch a Revelation, properly atteſted; and this is not to believe in empty Sounds,

but

but to believe Truths, handed to our Minds by ſuch Words, regularly connected, as are eaſy, and familiar to us; which is all the Way of believing that I know of.

Thus, I ſay, it is neceſſary that Sinners become acquainted with the eſſential Articles of the *Chriſtian Religion* that they may believe them, and with it's Duties, that they may do them. For while Perſons remain ignorant of the Doctrines, and Laws, of Chriſt, which contain the Way unto Salvation, how is it poſſible they ſhould be ſaved? ſeeing they know not the Path-Way thereof. This, peculiarly, is that *Knowledge, which*, the Wiſe Man telleth us, Prov. xix. 2. *it is not good that the Soul be without.*

A Man, indeed, may know a great Deal, may be well read in the Doctrines, and Duties, of *Chriſtianity*, and yet not be ſaved after all; becauſe, it is poſſible, he may act contrary to his Light and Knowledge. But if he remain entirely ignorant of the Way of Salvation, if he knoweth not what he muſt do to be ſaved, how then can he be ſaved? If the Underſtanding be not informed, and enlightned, how ſhall the Man act any otherwiſe than as the Brute Creature, by external Force, and Impulſe? Or how ſhall the rational Mind be directed to the proper Object, or right Manner, of it's religious Worſhip, and Adoration? Nay, how ſhall the Hands, and Feet, be guided unto any vertuous Action? That is, without Knowledge the Man acteth blindly, and in the Dark, and can never offer unto God a reaſonable Service. Hence ſaid our *Saviour*, Matth. vi. 23. *If thine Eye be evil, thy whole Body ſhall be full of Darkneſs; if, therefore, the Light that is in thee be Darkneſs, how great is that Darkneſs?* Men may be in the Light, and it prove their Condemnation, becauſe they act contrary to the Light which they have; but if they are in total Darkneſs, if the Light that is in them *be*

Darkneſs,

Darkneſs, and that through their own Default, becauſe they ſhut their Eyes, and act as if they were in the Dark, how can they poſſibly eſcape Condemnation? *Yet a little while*, (ſaid Chriſt) *the Light is with you; walk while ye have the Light, leſt Darkneſs come upon you; for he, that walketh in Darkneſs, knoweth not whither he goeth; While ye have the Light believe in the Light, that ye may be the Children of the Light.* Joh. xii. 35, 36. And the Apoſtle *John* ſaid, 1 Joh. i. 6. *If we ſay we have Fellowſhip with him, and walk in Darkneſs,* (the Darkneſs of Ignorance, and Sin,) *we lie, and do not the Truth.* He will but deceive himſelf with vain Hopes of Salvation, who is in the Dark about the Way leading thereto; which is generally the Caſe of the Heathen World, who, tho' they have ſome Hope, or rather Notion, of a future Happineſs, yet, are deſtitute of Goſpel Light, which alone ſheweth the Way to it.

It is not to be wondered at to ſee Men do amiſs, who know no better. If they are Strangers to the true God, how ſhall they ſerve him? If they are in Ignorance by what Means to appeaſe his Anger, how ſhall they be at Peace with him, and reap the Benefits of his Friendſhip? If they know not Jeſus Chriſt, but are utter Strangers to his Perſon, Offices, and Benefits, how ſhall they believe in him, and be ſaved by him? Hence we find ſo great a Streſs laid, in the Scripture, upon Knowledge, that our Renovation is ſaid to be *in Knowledge*; Col. iii. 10. and they, that *take away the Key of Knowledge*, are ſaid, Luk. xi. 52. *to hinder Men from entering into the Kingdom of Heaven*: and it is given as the Reaſon, why the *Jewiſh* World did not receive, and believe, on Chriſt, Joh. i. 10. becauſe *the World knew him not.* Whilſt Perſons know not their Duty, how can they poſſibly perform it? It is a reaſonable Service which God requireth of us, and not what we ſtumble upon by Chance.

Chance. The ignorant Soul is evidently periſhing, and his Condition is hopeleſs, at preſent, becauſe his Ignorance hinders his doing any Thing towards his own Salvation. Therefore the *Prophet* obſerves, Iſa. lix. 8. *The Way of Peace they know not, and there is no Judgment in their goings; they have made them crooked Paths, whoſoever goeth therein ſhall not know Peace.* So that it is neceſſary that Sinners be acquainted with the great Fundamental Doctrines, and Duties, of the *Chriſtian Religion*, in order to their being ſaved. And therefore,

3. The Sinner muſt take Pains to inform himſelf in the Knowledge of thoſe Doctrines, and Duties. Since there are various Doctrines to be believed, and Duties to be performed, in the *Chriſtian* Life, and the Knowledge of theſe is neceſſary to our Faith, and Practice, becauſe, without the Knowledge of them, we can neither believe the one, nor practice the other, therefore, this is what the periſhing Sinner, who is advantaged with the glad Tidings of the Poſſibility of Salvation, has firſtly to do, namely, to be at ſome Pains with himſelf, to inform his Mind, that he may know what thoſe Doctrines, and Duties, are, which are neceſſary for him to believe, and do. For, this Knowledge is not born with any Man, nor does he bring into the World with him any natural Light, which is ſufficient, of itſelf, as he groweth up to Years of Underſtanding, to diſcover theſe Things unto him; though he bringeth with him a Capacity to receive the Light, when it is objected to him, and the Clouds, and Duſt, that ſurround him, are removed. It may be truly ſaid, to every Man, that has any Knowledge of theſe Divine Things, as Chriſt ſaid to *Peter*, with Reſpect to one of the eſſential Articles of our Faith, Matth. xvi. 17. *Fleſh, and Blood, hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father, which is in Heaven.* For the Things that are neceſſary unto Salvation are ſpiritual, and heavenly

heavenly, and ſo only ſpiritually diſcerned, by the Revelation of the Goſpel, and the Aſſiſtance of the *Spirit* of God: for *the natural Man*, ſays the *Apoſtle*, 1 Cor. ii. 14. *receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God, for they are Fooliſhneſs unto him; neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.*

Something, indeed, of the Knowledge of God, and the Duties of Morality, may be diſcovered by the Light of natural Reaſon, and Conſcience; but the great, and peculiar, Doctrines of the Goſpel, and how to worſhip God acceptably, and even the moral Law, in the full Extent of it, as enlarged, and explained, and refined, by the great, and only, *Saviour* of the World, turn purely upon Revelation: tho' ſome, who have the Advantage of Revelation, are ready vainly to imagine, that their own Reaſon is ſufficient for all the fine Diſcoveries, which that Revelation has helped them to.

God has been pleaſed graciouſly to condeſcend to our Weakneſs, and made a full, and clear, Revelation of all that is neceſſary to be known by us, in order to our Salvation: He ſent his *Prophets*, in ancient Times, fully commiſſioned with Authority from him, to declare his Mind, and Will, unto his People; and, in the latter Days, *hath ſpoken to us by his Son*, who lay in the Boſom of the *Father*, and was perfectly acquainted with all the Divine Counſels of Peace, whom he hath ſent to teach, and inſtruct, Sinners, in the Way of Life, as well as to die for them. And Jeſus Chriſt hath been faithful, in the Houſe of God, as a Son, perſonally declaring what he had received of the *Father*; and hath commiſſioned, and inſpired with his *Spirit*, his holy *Apoſtles* after him, to make ſuch farther Diſcoveries, of the Mind of God, as were neceſſary to compleat the Canon of the Scripture, and render it a perfect Rule of Faith, and Manners. Farther alſo, Jeſus Chriſt hath

hath commiſſioned a ſtanding Order of Men, whom he has promiſed to be with to the End of the World, Matth. xxviii. 19, 20. *to go, and diſciple all Nations,---- teaching them to obſerve all Things, whatſoever he hath commanded.* And, I truſt, we can appeal to our People, and ſay, with the great Apoſtle *Paul*, Acts xx. 20. *We have kept back nothing that was profitable unto you*; and that *we have not ſhunned to declare unto you all the Counſel of God.* ℣. 27.

But though, it hath pleaſed God to make the cleareſt Revelation of what he requireth of us, and his Miniſters ſhould be ever ſo faithful in inſtructing their People, what that Revelation is, and in their beſt Endeavours to enforce, not by Violence, but by Reaſon, and Perſuaſion, the Belief, and Practice, of it; yet, if Perſons will not, themſelves, be at any Pains, to improve the Helps and Advantages, God has favoured them with, that they may come to the Knowledge of the Truth, as it is in Jeſus, they will, after all, remain in Ignorance, and periſh among them that are loſt. If, therefore, periſhing Sinners would be ſaved, they muſt thirſt after this Knowledge, and Endeavour, in all proper Ways, to enlighten their Minds, that they may know the Things which are freely given us of God.

To this End, they muſt daily read the Word of God, and ſearch the Scriptures, which contain the whole of the divine Revelation, that they may ſee with their own Eyes, and found their Faith, and Practice, upon the Word of God, and not the Creeds, and Commandments, of Men, nor the uncertain Impulſes of their own Minds. Thus God's People of old, were commanded, Deut. xi. 18, 19. *ye ſhall lay up theſe my Words in your Heart, and in your Soul, and bind them for a Sign upon your Hand; and you ſhall teach them your Children,* &c. And the *Bereans* are commended, Acts xvii. 11.

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in that *they ſearched the Scriptures daily, whether thoſe Things were ſo.*

But beſide this, they muſt alſo attend upon the Word preached, and ſo wait at the Poſts of Wiſdom's Gate, and hear, that they may receive Inſtruction in the Words of Life; for *Faith cometh by Hearing, and Hearing by the Word of God*, Rom. x. 17.

To theſe they muſt add their frequent, and ſerious Meditation upon the Word read, and heard; call to mind the Truths that have been handed to them, and weigh well the Doctrines, and Duties, that have been taught them; that, by ruminating upon them, they may the better digeſt them, and ſee more of the Nature, Excellency, and Neceſſity, of them, and may have them ever ready at hand to influence them in the Whole of their Conduct and Behaviour.

And when there occurreth any reaſonable Difficulty to them, in any Article of Faith, or any practical Duty, it would be Prudence in them to have Recourſe to ſuch as may be more knowing than themſelves, eſpecially to their Miniſters, not dogmatically to determine their Faith, or enjoin their Commands upon them, but to open to them the Scriptures, enlighten their Minds, and explain their Difficulties, that they may be enabled, themſelves, to ſee their Way more clearly.

To all of which they muſt add their fervent Prayers to the *Father of Lights*, that he would pleaſe to cauſe a divine Light to ſhine into them, and give them Underſtanding, that they might know the Way in which they ſhould walk, that they may live and keep the Word of God; ſaying, with the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſ. cxix. 18, 19. *Open thou mine Eyes, that I may behold wondrous Things out of thy Law; I am a Stranger in the Earth, hide not thy Commandments from me.*

For all of theſe, (which I have but now hinted at,

and ſhall have Occaſion to ſpeak more largely to hereafter,) are proper, appointed, Means of coming at the Knowledge of thoſe Things which are neceſſary to be known, in order to Salvation. And theſe are what the Sinner can do; he can read, and hear, and meditate, and ask Advice, and pray to God; and theſe he muſt do, or he will neglect the Means of Salvation; and if he continue ignorant, and, at laſt, periſh for lack of Viſion, it will be a wilful Ignorance, in him, and his Deſtruction will be from himſelf. This is the Direction, and Encouragement, of the Wiſe Man, Prov. ii. init. *My Son if thou wilt receive my Words, and hide my Commandments with thee, ſo that thou incline thine Ear unto Wiſdom, and applieſt thine Heart unto Underſtanding; yea, if thou cryeſt after Knowledge, and lifteſt up thy Voice for Underſtanding, if thou ſeekeſt her as Silver, and ſearcheſt for her, as for hid Treaſures; then ſhall thou underſtand the Fear of the Lord, and find the Knowledge of GOD.*

This, then, is the firſt Thing the periſhing Sinner has to do, in order to his being ſaved, namely, to get his Mind well informed, by a diligent Uſe, and Improvement, of all proper Means, that he may know what is neceſſary to be known by him.

From what has been ſaid, upon this Head, we may learn theſe Things, viz.

USE. I. That a Man cannot, regularly hope to be ſaved in all Religions.

There are ſome Things neceſſary to be known, and done, in order to Salvation; and unleſs thoſe neceſſary Things are to be found in all Religions, (which they are not, becauſe ſome of them, at leaſt, depend upon Revelation, which ſome Religions, in the World, are wholly deſtitute of,) a Man cannot be ſaved in all Religions; becauſe he cannot know, and do, all that is neceſſary to Salvation: and becauſe theſe neceſſary Things are peculiar

peculiar to the *Chriſtian Religion*, therefore, there is no Salvation, that we know of, but in, and by, That only; and of Conſequence no Man can regularly hope to be ſaved, in any other Religion. The Doctrines of the *Chriſtian Religion* are certain, and invariable; The Canon is compleated by Inſpiration from God; and what has ſo come from God no Man may alter, add to it, or diminiſh from it. The Duties of *Chriſtianity* are the ſame, thro'out all Generations, and incumbent upon all Perſons, in like Circumſtances; and therefore were not intended for one Sett of Men that call themſelves *Chriſtians*, and not for another; and it is in the Knowledge of theſe Doctrines, and Practice of theſe Duties, that God has been pleaſed to let the World know, that Salvation is attainable; and he has not informed us of any other Method of Men's being ſaved. Therefore we may ſafely conclude, that we know of no Salvation, attainable by any Man, but in the *Chriſtian Religion*; becauſe Salvation does not neceſſarily reſult from the Divine Nature, but is a free Act of the Divine Good-Pleaſure. Hence, let Men be of what Religion they will, and appear externally very Devout towards God, and Juſt towards Man, yet, if the Doctrines they embrace, are not *Chriſtian*, but *Pagan*, or *Mahometan*, or *Jewiſh*, and if the Duties they perform are not ſuch as are required of them in the *Chriſtian Religion*, and done by them upon the Foundations of that Religion; yea, ſuppoſe a Sect, that are called *Chriſtians*, who yet hold thoſe Tenets, and do thoſe Things for Duties, which are truly contrary to, or ſubverſive of, the *Chriſtian Religion*; all their apparent Devotion, and exemplary Juſtice, will not avail them to Salvation, that we know of. That is, as far as we are capable of forming any Judgment, a Man cannot be ſaved in all Religions, nor regularly hope for it.

2. We may from hence ſee, that it is very unſafe

ſafe truſting to this Principle, That a Man ſhall be ſaved, by living up to the Light, and Knowledge, which he has. For I do not know, nor have I any ſolid Foundation to build ſuch a Concluſion upon, That any Man ſhall be ſaved, who liveth up to his natural Light, (ſuppoſing ſuch a Thing,) while he is wholly deſtitute of Revelation; becauſe all the poſſible Ways of Salvation, that we can know of, muſt be included in a Divine Revelation, and not inferred from the Nature of God; (as I have formerly ſhewed.) Much leſs then can it be ſafe for any, who have a Divine Revelation in their Hands, to chooſe to follow the Dictates of their own Reaſon, without any Regard had to that Revelation. For, though, I doubt not, where there is a ſincere Willingneſs to know, and do, according to what the *Chriſtian Religion* requireth, God will graciouſly *accept, according to that a Man hath, and not according to that he hath not*, 2 Cor. viii. 12. yet, he that hath the Means, and Opportunity, of knowing, and doing, better, and, for Want of a due Improvement of them, liveth in the Diſbelief of any eſſential Article, and Neglect of any of the great Duties, of the *Chriſtian Religion*, can have no good Grounds to hope that he ſhall be ſaved: becauſe the Belief of thoſe Articles, and Practice of thoſe Duties, are neceſſary, to Salvation, according to the Goſpel Diſpenſation; and all the Ignorance ſuch an one can pretend to is wilful. Luk. xii. 48. *He that knew not* (his Lord's Will,) *and did commit Things worthy of Stripes, ſhall be beaten with few Stripes*; compared with him who ſinneth directly againſt Light, and Knowledge.

3. We may from hence learn, how juſtly they will miſs of Salvation who will not be at the Pains to inform themſelves, in what is neceſſary for them to know. For, they muſt make light of Salvation, indeed, who, though they hear of the Excel-

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lency, and Poſſibility, of it, yet, do not think it to be worth their while to be at any Pains, to acquaint themſelves with what is neceſſary for them to know, that they may be ſaved. Surely, nothing can be more Juſt, than that they ſhould go without the Benefits of it, who do not eſteem it worth their having. The *Apoſtle* ſaid, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. *If our Goſpel be hid, it is hid unto them that are loſt; in whom the God of this World hath blinded the Minds of them which believe not, leſt the Light of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt, who is the Image of the inviſible God, ſhould ſhine into them.* This is true, not only of thoſe Nations, who never had the Goſpel preached to them, but of thoſe, who, though they live where the Goſpel is preached, yet, remain in groſs Ignorance, thro' the Blindneſs of their Minds, the Prejudice of various Luſts, and their wilful neglect. For the Goſpel, or Methods of Salvation, by Jeſus Chriſt, are as truly hid from them, who will not endeavour to acquaint themſelves with them, as from thoſe who do not enjoy them: As thoſe are in Darkneſs, who ſhut their Eyes againſt the Light, as truly as thoſe who have not the Light ſhining upon them. And this wilful Ignorance will be ſo far from an Excuſe for them, another Day, however they may think themſelves excuſed by it now, as that it will greatly aggravate their Condemnation; becauſe, they enjoyed the Means of Knowledge, but refuſed to improve them. They will not only, as certainly miſs of Salvation as the *Pagan* World, but, their Puniſhment will be ſo much the greater, becauſe their Ignorance was affected; which argueth a very high Degree of Slight, and Contempt, caſt upon the offered Mercy of God. Hence it was, that our bleſſed *Saviour* ſaid, John iii. 19. *This is the Condemnation,* (this in a peculiar Manner is the aggravated Condemnation,) *that Light is come into the World, but Men love Darkneſs, rather than Light, becauſe their Deeds are evil.*

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4. Hence learn, That it is your great Duty, and the firſt Thing you have to do, in order to your Salvation, to be at Pains to inform yourſelves of all that is neceſſary to be known. This is what nearly concerns you; and ſhould ſtir you up to do what you can, that your Minds may be inſtructed in all neceſſary Truths; (Eſpecially thoſe of you who are very much interrupted, the greateſt Part of the Year, by your being upon the Waters, ſhould the more diligently improve this receſs of the Winter, to gain the Knowledge of ſpiritual and divine Things;) and put you upon begging it of God, to make your ſpeculative Knowledge to become a ſaving Illumination, through the Influences of his *Holy Spirit*, and that he would give you a ſpiritual Underſtanding in the Myſteries of his Kingdom. And need have you to take Pains to inform yourſelves better, becauſe it is to be feared, that many among us, and through out the *Chriſtian* World, notwithſtanding all the Labour that is beſtowed upon them, and though they are taught better, yet through their Heedleſſneſs, and Neglect duely to improve the Means they enjoy, remain in great Ignorance of the Doctrines, and Duties, of the *Chriſtian* Life, to this very Day: and it may be ſaid to ſuch, as the *Apoſtle* to ſome of the *Hebrews*, Heb. v. 12. *When for the Time ye ought to be Teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the firſt Principles of the Oracles of God; being Babes, and unskilful in the Word of Righteouſneſs.* I charitably perſwade myſelf, that many Perſons would do better if they knew better: they would not allow themſelves in ſuch ill Things, as they do, to the Diſhonour of God, and the Injury of their Neighbour, were it not that the looſe Education they have had, and their Prejudice in Favour of Self, blind their Eyes, that they do not ſee that they do very wrong Things; and ſo their Ignorance is very much the Cauſe of their

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ill Manners. But then ſuch their Ignorance is very much their own Fault, when a little cloſe thinking, and examining of the Rule, would ſhew them their Miſtake, and correct their Errors.

Well then; have you any ſerious Thoughts of being ſaved? Do you hope that God, for Chriſt his Sake, will pardon all your Sins? Do you expect to go to Heaven when you die, and leave this World? And will you not then be at ſome Pains to know the Way thither? Will you not endeavour to acquaint yourſelves with what you muſt believe, and do, in order to your Intereſt in Chriſt, and Salvation by him? Will you not be more conſtant, and attentive, in your reading, and hearing, the Word of God? Will you not more accuſtom yourſelves to frequent, and ſerious, Meditation, on ſpiritual, and divine Things? Will you not conſult your Teachers, and meekly ſubmit to their faithful Inſtructions? Will you not, from this Time, be more conſtant, and fervent, in Prayer to God, to enlighten your Minds, and ſhew you the Path of Life, and cauſe you to walk in it? Believe it; if you neglect theſe Things, your Ignorance of God, and *Religion*, will be no Excuſe to you, in the great Day of Account; however any may palliate their Crimes, and ſilence the Clamors of their own Conſciences, and ſtop the Mouths of their Neighbours, by this vain Pretence, now. Hence, you may obſerve the great God ſaying, concerning his antient People, Iſa. xxvii. 11. *It is a People of no Underſtanding; therefore he that made them will not have Mercy on them, and he that formed them will ſhew them no Favour.*

God has been at the Pains, not only, to give you the common Underſtandings of Men, but, to bring his Word home to you, to put it into your Hands, that it may be as a Lamp unto your Feet, and a Light unto your Path, and therein has plainly told you, what you muſt do to be ſaved; He has

ſhewed you what is the good Way you ſhould walk in, and warned you of the Danger of all evil, and ſinful Ways, that you may avoid them; and he has ſent his Servants, his Miniſters, riſing early, and ſending them, even from your Youth up, to take you by the Hand, and lead you in the Way wherein you ſhould go. Thus God has done his Part, and the Means are plainly before you, and within your Power.

But if, after all, you will not do your own Part, and improve the Means you enjoy; if you will caſt the Word of God behind your Backs, and abſent yourſelves from the Houſe of God; or will not mind what you read, and hear, nor ask it of God to ſeal Inſtruction to you; know it for certain, that it will be a wilful Ignorance in you, if, under all theſe Means, you ſhould remain Strangers to the Things of your Peace; and if, at laſt, it ſhould be ſaid of any of you, as of God's profeſſing People of old, Hoſ. iv. 6. *My People are deſtroyed for lack of Knowledge*, you will be found to be Self-Deſtroyers; and have no Body to blame but your own ſelves, becauſe you rejected Knowledge, and deſpiſed Inſtruction. And, Oh! how ſadly will you *mourn, at the laſt? when thy Fleſh, and thy Body, are conſumed: and thou ſhall ſay, How have I hated Inſtruction, and my Heart deſpiſed Reproof, and have not obeyed the Voice of my Teachers, nor enclined mine Ear to them that inſtructed me?* Think therefore, ſeriouſly, of thoſe awful Words of our *Saviour*, (with which I now conclude,) Joh. xv. 22. *If I had not come, and ſpoken to them, they had not had Sin; but now they have no Cloak for their Sin.*

§ §

SERMON

Faith abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation.

SERMON IX.

ACTS XVI. 30.

And ſaid, Sirs, What muſt I do to be ſaved ?

THE Doctrine, I have once and again offered from theſe Words, you may remember, was,

Doc. It is of the higheſt Concernment to periſhing Sinners, to be very ſolicitous, what they ſhall do to be ſaved : or, to know, and practice, all that is neceſſary, in order to their Salvation. The Method I have propoſed to purſue, in diſcourſing upon this Text, and Doctrine, is,

I. To ſhew you what it is to be ſaved ; or, what is that Salvation which periſhing Sinners ſtand in Need of.

II. To evidence that periſhing Sinners may be ſaved ; or, there is a Poſſibility, notwithſtanding their preſent miſerable Condition, that they may be eternally ſaved.

III. That

III. That periſhing Sinners muſt know, and practiſe, all that is neceſſary; in order to their Salvation; or, there is ſomething to be done, by them, that they may be ſaved.

VI. This is a Matter of the higheſt Concernment to them, and therefore they ought to be moſt ſeriouſly ſolicitous about it. Having, in ſome former Diſcourſes, ſhewed you what Salvation is, and the Poſſibility of it, I entered upon the Third of theſe Heads, the laſt Opportunity: viz.

III. That periſhing Sinners muſt know, and practiſe, all that is neceſſary, in order to their Salvation; or, there is ſomething to be done, by them, that they may be ſaved. Under this Head, I propoſed to conſider theſe two Things, for the clearing of it. viz.

[I.] That the Sinner cannot ſave himſelf, merely, by the Virtue, Power, and Efficacy, of all that he can do. And yet,

[II.] That it is abſolutely neceſſary that the Sinner do ſomething, in order to his own Salvation. And what he muſt do, I ſaid, is comprehended under that of his Knowledge, and his Practice.

I. The periſhing Sinner muſt know all that is neceſſary, in order to his Salvation.

II. The periſhing Sinner muſt reduce his Knowledge into Practice, and be ready to do, all that he ſhall know to be his Duty, in order to his being ſaved. I have gone through the Firſt of theſe, namely,

I. The periſhing Sinner muſt know all that is neceſſary, in order to his Salvation. I have obſerved, that there are certain doctrinal Articles to be believed, and practical Duties to be performed, as neceſſary unto Salvation; and the Sinner muſt know what theſe are, or he cannot believe the one, nor perform the other; and therefore he muſt take Pains with himſelf to inform his Underſtanding

ſtanding aright, that he may know what the Things are which the Lord his God requireth of him, that he may be ſaved. Thus far I have gone, and now proceed to the Conſideration of the Second Head; viz.

II. The periſhing Sinner muſt reduce his Knowledge into Practice, and be ready to do, all that he ſhall know to be his Duty, in order to his being ſaved. This is evidently implied in the Language of the *Jaylor*, when he ſaid, *What muſt I do to be ſaved*? it ſpeaks his Readineſs to put into Practice whatſoever he ſhould know to be his Duty to do. It is not enough, that Sinners know what the Terms of Salvation are, in what Way, and by what Means, they may obtain the Forgiveneſs of their Sins, eſcape Hell, and get ſafe to Heaven, but, though this is their Duty, and they cannot rationally hope to be ſaved in their Ignorance, yet, they muſt put their own Hands to the Labour, and exert themſelves to do all that is required of them; vigorouſly run that they obtain the incorruptible Crown, and manfully fight, that they may overcome all Obſtacles that lie in their Way, and diligently obſerve the Laws of their God, that they may be accepted of him; for all their moſt perfect Knowledge, without Practice, will never carry them to Heaven.

They do but greatly deceive themſelves, who imagine this to be all that is required of them, in order to their partaking of the great Salvation of the Goſpel, that they be well read, and ſtudied, in the Principles, the Doctrines, and Duties, of the *Chriſtian Religion*; that they know the Truth, and are able to diſcourſe upon it, with Clearneſs, Copiouſneſs, and Cogency, that they ſtand up to aſſert, and defend, the Truth, againſt Oppoſers, and are able to convince, and put to Silence, the Authors, and Fomenters, of Errors, and Hereſies. Theſe are laudable Qualifications, and amiable, in their

their Place; and they do well that covet earneſtly the beſt Gifts; yet ſhew I unto you a more excellent Way. They muſt do, as well as ſay, if they would partake of the matchleſs Benefits of Salvation, contained, and offered, in the Truths of the Goſpel. The Apoſtle *James* therefore ſaid, Jam. i. 22. *Be ye Doers of the Word, and not Hearers only, deceiving your own ſelves.* Men may hear the Word diligently, attentively, and with much Affection, and yet deceive themſelves, with falſe grounded Hopes of Happineſs, for want of doing according to what they hear. Though they make the greateſt Proficiency, in the ſpeculative Knowledge of Divine Truths, yet they will fall ſhort of the Bleſſing, if they are not careful practically to improve what they know. The *Scribes*, and *Phariſees*, in our *Saviour*'s Time, were the great Doctors of the Law, among the *Jews*; it was their peculiar Buſineſs to ſtudy the Law, and explain it, and teach it to the People; and yet, for all that, our Lord ſaid to his Diſciples. Matth. v. 20. *Verily, I ſay unto you, except your Righteouſneſs ſhall exceed the Righteouſneſs of the Scribes, and Phariſees, ye ſhall, in no Caſe, enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* And the Reaſon was, not becauſe the *Scribes*, and *Phariſees*, were ignorant of the Law; no, they knew the Law, and were acquainted with their Duty; but, becauſe they did not reduce their Knowledge to Practice, and live up to what they knew; though they made their Boaſt of the Law, yet, through breaking the Law, they diſhonoured God; their Hearts, and Lives, were a Contradiction to their Knowledge, and they were very defective in moral Duties. Therefore it was ſaid of them, Matth. xxiii. 4. *They bind heavy Burdens, and grievous to be born, and lay them on Men's Shoulders, but they themſelves will not move them with one of their Fingers.* They were knowing enough, in all the Points of their Religion, to teach, and inſtruct others, and inſiſt upon their being

being very exact, in every little Rite, and Mode, and yet they would not ſo much as put forth their Hand, they would not be at the trouble to move a Finger, to perform what they knew to be their Duty. Therefore our Lord pronounced a Wo upon them, ſaying, ℣. 23. *Wo unto you, Scribes, and Phariſees, Hypocrites ; for ye pay Tythe of Mint, and Anniſe, and Cummin, and have omitted the weightier Matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy, and Faith.*

So, in the *Chriſtian* World, Men may not only be great Maſters of Reaſon, above their Neighbours, but, by reading, and hard Study, may arrive at uncommon Meaſures of Knowledge in the Doctrines, and Duties, of *Chriſtianity* ; they may be well ſtudied in the *Chriſtian Religion*, in all the Parts of it, as a Science, and may make great Proficiency, and Improvement, in the ſpeculative Knowledge of it, and yet, for want of acting according to their Knowledge, and living up to the Truths they are acquainted with, at laſt, be found amongſt the Workers of Iniquity, and come ſhort of the Reſt that remaineth for the People of God. There are many, it is to be feared, among profeſſing *Chriſtians*, who ſatisfy themſelves with this, that they know as much as their Neighbours, they have been well inſtructed in their Youth, and have had the Advantage of ſetting under a learned, and orthodox Miniſtry, and are become well acquainted with the Principles of the *Chriſtian Religion*, and they doubt not but that they ſhall fare as well, in the Concluſion, as thoſe preciſe, ſcrupulous, weak Creatures, as they account them, who will not allow themſelves to go their Lengths, and practiſe as they do. But, let me tell all ſuch Self-Deceivers, that all the Knowledge, and Learning, in the World, will not ſave them, unleſs they make it their conſtant Care to live according to what they know, and add to their Knowledge

Temperance,

Temperance, and Patience, and Godlineſs, and Brotherly-Kindneſs, and Charity; for without theſe Things they will remain barren, and unfruitful, in the Knowledge of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Perſons may be well read in the Holy Scriptures, they may have them at their Fingers Ends, and yet periſh, at laſt, for want of a real Conformity to what the Word of God requireth of them. As one, among ourſelves, once well expreſſed it †:

Dum Probitas indocta Polum petit, atq; prehendit,
Doctos, ſi pravos, Prædam ſibi poſcit Avernus.

While untaught Vertue'll ſcand, and gain, the Pole,
Wide Hell demands the letter'd, guilty, Soul.

In ſhort, the End of all Knowledge is Practice. As all Knowledge in the Things of Nature, and Art, that has not, ſome way or other, an Influence, for the better, upon the Practice of Mankind, is vain, and inſignificant; ſo, in Religion, whatever fine Speculations any may entertain about it, who have not their practical Judgment improved thereby, and are not careful to rectify their Hearts, and Lives, by the Knowledge which they have, they are, in the Account of the ſacred Scriptures, but *as the Horſe, and Mule, without Underſtanding*. Pſal. xxxii. 9. Yea, their Knowledge will but ſo much the more aggravate their Crime, and encreaſe their Puniſhment, while their Lives are a Contradiction to what they know to be their Duty; for, *to him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is Sin*: Jam. iv. 17. It is Sin, with this peculiar Aggravation, that he acteth againſt the Light of his own Mind, and ſtandeth ſelf condemned in what he does.

So that, as ever periſhing Sinners would be ſaved, it concerns them not only to *know*, but to *do*,

† The *Reverend Mr. Nehemiah Hobart*, of *Newton*, in a Latin Panegyrick upon ſome of Mr. *Cheever's* Scholars.

do, all that is neceſſary in order to their Salvation. There is ſomething to be done, by the Sinner himſelf, that he may eſcape Hell, and get ſafe to Heaven, and all that is neceſſary to be done by him is included in theſe two Words, *Faith*, and *Repentance*, which therefore are a direct Anſwer to the great Enquiry, *what muſt I do to be ſaved?* Thus the Apoſtle *Paul* giveth us the Summary of all his preaching, and what he ever taught, both publickly, and privately, as the great Duties incumbent upon every one that would be ſaved, in that ſaying, Acts xx. 21. *Teſtifying, both to Jews, and alſo to the Greeks, Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* According to this great Example, I ſhall now conſider theſe, as the two main Hinges upon which all our Practice turneth, and therefore as including all that is neceſſary for the Sinner to do, that he may obtain that eternal Salvation that is ſet before him in the Goſpel. And I ſhall begin with the laſt of them firſt.

I. It is abſolutely neceſſary, that periſhing Sinners believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in order to their being ſaved.

II. It is abſolutely neceſſary, that the periſhing Sinner repent of all his Sins, in order to his being ſaved.

Theſe two grand Points of *Chriſtianity* are well worthy of our moſt ſerious Conſideration, being of ſuch Weight, and Importance, that no Man can be a true *Chriſtian*, without them; and yet being deſigned for Perſons of the meaneſt Capacity, as well as thoſe of more enlarged Minds, I am apt to think, that there is not that Difficulty in a ſufficiently right underſtanding them which ſome are ready to imagine; becauſe an infinitely wiſe and good God cannot be ſuppoſed to require ſuch Things, as Duties neceſſary to the Salvation of Mankind, as exceed the Capacity of the Meaneſt,

and

and puzzle the Underſtanding of abler Heads, to entertain a juſt Conception what it is that is demanded of them. I ſhall endeavour therefore, with all Plainneſs, to ſhew you, as God ſhall enable me, the Nature, and Neceſſity of them.

I. It is abſolutely neceſſary, that periſhing Sinners believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in order to their being ſaved.

This being a very great, and eſſential Doctrine, and Duty, of *Chriſtianity*, laid down in the Goſpel, in the ſtrongeſt Terms, and often repeated, and moſt peremptorily required of us, I ſhall endeavour to lead you into a right Conception of it, by diſtinctly conſidering theſe following Heads; which, I truſt, will open to you, the Nature, and Neceſſity, of a true Goſpel Faith, even that Faith which if a Man have, he ſhall be pardoned, juſtified, and eternally ſaved; and ſhew you what the Sinner muſt do to obtain it: viz.

I. I ſhall ſhew you, what it is to believe in Jeſus Chriſt, or what that Faith in Chriſt is, which the Goſpel requireth of Sinners, as neceſſary to their Salvation.

II. I ſhall evidence that this Faith in Chriſt, which the Goſpel requireth, is abſolutely neceſſary to the Sinner's Salvation.

III. I ſhall then conſider, what the periſhing Sinner muſt do to obtain this Faith in Chriſt, that he may be ſaved.

I. I am to ſhew you, what it is to believe in Jeſus Chriſt; or what that Faith in Chriſt is, which the Goſpel requireth of Sinners, as neceſſary to their Salvation.

Here I ſhall not trouble myſelf, nor you, with the many School Diſtinctions, about the Nature of a juſtifying, ſaving, Faith; the moſt of which appear to me to be no better than vain Diſputations, and idle Wranglings, to no good Purpoſe: for the greateſt Part of Mankind are not capable of receiving

ceiving them, and entertaining any clear Conception of them; and, probably, the far greater Part of true Believers know nothing at all about them; and if they knew more of them than they do, they would but ſerve, rather, the more to puzzle their Heads, than to better their Hearts, or Lives, and very much tend to bewilder them in Uncertainties of their own State, or puff them up with a vain Conceit of themſelves; as, on the one Hand, we ſee many good *Chriſtians* walking in Darkneſs, and calling in Queſtion the Truth of their Faith, becauſe their Minds have been greatly clouded with the Smoke, and Duſt, ariſing from the ſubtle, and intricate, Diſtinctions, and Diſputations of Men; and very looſe, and carnal Profeſſors, on the other Hand, fondly concluding the Certainty of their Faith, and highly opinionated of themſelves, becauſe their Tongues are tip'd with a peculiar ſett of Phraſes, they have been taught to be the diſtinguiſhing Characters of a ſaving Faith, which yet they underſtand not. The Goſpel Account of that Faith in Chriſt, which is neceſſary to Salvation, and ſo to our being juſtified, and accepted of God, ſeemeth, to me, ſufficiently plain, and level to the loweſt Capacity, and I ſhall not endeavour to make it leſs plain, but, if poſſible, to remove the Rubbiſh, and wipe off the Duſt, that it may appear in a fair Light, and you may ſee more diſtinctly what that great Duty of believing is, which is required of you.

Only I would obſerve, that in diſcourſing upon the Doctrine of Faith in Chriſt, I am not concerned to enter into any particular Conſideration of the Belief of the Being of a God; becauſe, though this is forever included in the Goſpel Diſpenſation, and the Faith therein required of us, yet it is nothing peculiar to the *Chriſtian Religion*, but is the common, and only certain, Foundation of all Religion; and I am prone to think, that there are

but very few, if any in the World, and I am pretty ſure that there are none ſuch among ourſelves, but what believe there is a God; though many are Fools enough to ſay in their Hearts, as their ſecret Wiſh, and, if they could, would, perſwade themſelves, that there is none.

The Faith that I am to treat of is, That Faith in Jeſus Chriſt, which the Goſpel *alone* requireth of us. I ſay the Goſpel *alone*; for, it was required of the *Jews*, under the Old Teſtament Diſpenſation, to believe in the *Meſſiah* to come, to whom all their legal Sacrifices, Services, and Prieſthood, had a ſpecial typical Reference, in which Senſe *the Goſpel was preached unto them*, as the Writer to the Hebrews obſerved; Heb. iv. 2. yet, by this, I would be underſtood to diſtinguiſh the Faith of the *Chriſtian*, not only from that of a *Pagan*, or *Mahometan*, but, from the Faith of the *Jew*; inaſmuch as the new Teſtament, which is, ſtrictly ſpeaking, the Goſpel, requireth of us Faith in the *Meſſiah*, or, Jeſus Chriſt, as already come, to all the Intents, and Purpoſes, he was originally deſigned for; as the promiſed Deliverer, who ſhould recover the World from the dreadful Effects of Satan's Malice, and Power, in engaging the human Nature in a Revolt from it's rightful Sovereign.

And becauſe this is ſo great an Article of real *Chriſtianity*, and that you may not be miſtaken in ſo important a Point, upon which all our Hopes of future Happineſs are dependent, I ſhall now proceed, with all convenient Plainneſs, and Brevity, to ſet before you, what appeareth to me to be, the true Goſpel Notion of Faith in Chriſt, or, what the Goſpel intendeth by a Sinner's believing on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to the Salvation of the Soul: for this the *Apoſtle*, in the *Verſe* following my *Text*, giveth, as a direct Anſwer to the *Jayler*'s Enquiry; *Believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved.*

Now

Now, in the General, this Faith, which the Goſpel requireth, in order to a Man's being juſtified, and ſaved, doth not ſeem to me, to mean, the Act of any one particular Power, only, of the Soul, but, of all the Powers of it, and ſo it is the whole Soul exerting itſelf, in it's Regards towards the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, according to the Demands of the Goſpel. It muſt be the Act of the whole Soul, becauſe the whole Soul is deſigned to be brought Home to God, by the Faith of Jeſus Chriſt; and Faith muſt have it's Regards to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as the ſpecial Object of it, becauſe it is in, and by, him alone, as our only Mediator, that we can have any Acceſs unto God; and it muſt be according to the Demands of the Goſpel, becauſe therein only we have a Revelation from God, how we may have Acceſs to him, by Faith in Chriſt Jeſus. And therefore, as I conceive, Faith in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, includeth, more particularly, theſe Things in it.

1. A ſerious, and firm, Perſwaſion of Mind concerning the Truth, and Certainty, of all that is revealed to us, in the Word of God, relating to Jeſus Chriſt, and the Way of Salvation by him.

2. An entire Satisfaction with the Methods of Salvation, by him, propounded to us in the Word of God.

3. An hearty Acceptance of, and Cloſure with, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as our *Saviour*, according to the Goſpel Offer.

Theſe Things, which ſeem to me to be level unto every ones Capacity, and comprehend in them that Faith in Chriſt, which the Goſpel Revelation inſiſteth upon, as neceſſary to Salvation, require to be more diſtinctly conſidered by us. And I beſeech you to give Attention to theſe Things, for they are your Life; and, as we go along, ſee whether theſe Tokens of Salvation are to be found upon you. Accordingly,

I. That Faith which the Goſpel demandeth, as neceſſary to Salvation, includeth in it, a ſerious, and firm, Perſwaſion of the Mind of the Truth, and Certainty, of all that is revealed to us, in the Word of God, relating to Jeſus Chriſt, and the Way of Salvation by him. Under this Head, are conſiderable, The general Nature of Faith, as being a firm Perſwaſion of the Mind; The ſpecial Nature of this Faith, as differencing of it from that which is merely humane, in that it is the Perſwaſion of the Mind of the Truth, and Certainty, of all that is revealed to us, in the Word of God; and the ſpecial Object of this Faith, namely Jeſus Chriſt, and the Way of Salvation by him, as ſo revealed. So that I am to conſider,

The general Nature of Faith, as being the ſerious and firm Perſwaſion of the Mind of Things reported to us. The Seat of this Faith is the Mind; Rom. xiv. 5. *Let every Man be fully perſwaded in his own Mind.* By the Mind, in this Place, I ſpecially intend the Underſtanding, that noble Power in us, by which we have any Conception of Things handed to us by our Senſes, deduced by our Reaſoning, or reported to us. The exerciſe of the Mind about thoſe Things which are the Objects of Faith is, it's being ſeriouſly, and firmly perſwaded of them; and the Foundation of this Perſwaſion, or what produceth this Exerciſe, of the Mind is, the Report that is made to us of any Matter, or Thing. So that Faith, in the general Notion of it is, the Perſwaſion of the Mind concerning any Thing which is reported to us. And thus thoſe Things that might, poſſibly, be objected to our Senſes, or be deduced from Principles of Reaſon, yet, by being firſt handed to the Mind, by Report from others, become properly the Objects of our Faith. So, *Through Faith, we underſtand that the Worlds were framed,*

framed, by the Word of God, ſo that Things which are ſeen were not made of Things which do appear. Heb. xi. 3.

Though in a more lax Way of ſpeaking, we often uſe the Words, Faith, and Knowledge, promiſcuouſly, yet they are really two diſtinct Things. We come at all our Knowledge, by our Senſes handing the various Images of Things to our Minds, and by our Reaſoning upon them: and when thoſe Images of Things, in our Minds, are exactly agreeable to the Objects which excite them, our Knowledge is then certain, or, it is true and proper Knowledge; but ſo far as the Images, or Conceptions, in our Minds, come ſhort of a correſpondent Agreement to the Truth, and Reality, of the Things repreſented by them, ſo far our Knowledge is uncertain, and imperfect, and at beſt can be no more that a fluctuating Opinion. By Reaſoning, and Diſcourſe, we infer leſs evident Truths, from thoſe that are more plainly, and certainly, evident to us; and if, from certainly known Principles, we make a juſt Inference, we have a certain Knowledge of the Concluſion alſo; but if, either our Principles are not certainly true, but falſe, or precarious, or, our Inference is not juſt and good, we have no true Knowledge of the Thing concluded upon, but deceive ourſelves with a vain Notion of it.

But now, Faith doth not reſult from this, or the other, Object, ſtriking immediately upon our Senſes, nor from our Reaſoning upon ſuch Ideas as our Minds are ſtored withal, but is grounded purely upon Teſtimony, and ariſeth from the Evidence we have of the Credibility of the Thing reported to us; *If I ſay the Truth, why do ye not believe me*; Joh. viii. 46. ſo that the Mind yeildeth it's Aſſent to the Truth of what is teſtifyed, upon the Evidence we have, or which we ſuppoſe we have, of the Veracity of the Speaker.

Thus, again, Faith is a very different Thing from Fancy, which, according to ſome, is but a faint Reſemblance of thoſe Things which are perceived by our external Senſes; and therefore while the Imagination has but a confuſed Notion of Things, it is not to be wondered at, that thoſe, who are very much under the Power of it, ſhould be led into Wildneſs, and Confuſion. Whereas the Objects of our Faith, I now mean our *Chriſtian* Faith, are Things which Eye hath not ſeen, nor hath it entred into the Heart of Man to conceive of them; they do not ariſe from our Senſes, nor from our Reaſonings, but God hath revealed them unto us, in Terms plain, and eaſy to be underſtood.

Farther, Faith is very diſtinct from Preſumption. For Preſumption is no other than the Mind's being perſwaded of the Truth, or Certainty, of a Thing, upon no Foundation, or without any ſufficient Evidence to ſupport it; which, in Religion, is of the moſt dangerous Conſequence: whereas the Faith required of us, is the Perſwaſion of the Mind, of any Truth, or Fact, upon full, and clear Evidence of the Ability, and Integrity, of the Speaker; and we may depend upon it, that God will never find Fault with any Man, for his not believing what he had no ſufficient Evidence of. Hence the Writer of the *Epiſtle* to the *Hebrews* giveth this Definition of Faith, Heb. xi. 1. *Now Faith is the Subſtance of Things hoped for, the Evidence of Things not ſeen.* Faith is built upon full Evidence, as the only ſolid Foundation of it.

And becauſe Faith is founded upon Teſtimony, therefore, according to the Evidence we have of the Credibility of that Teſtimony, ſo will the Mind be either firmly perſwaded of the Truth of the Thing reported to us, or remain in Doubt, and be at Uncertainties about it: and thus our Reaſon is aſſiſting to our Faith, by forming a Judgment of the Credibility of the Thing reported to us; for though

though we may not be able to ſee into the Reaſon of the Thing reported, (as is the Caſe of all who, at firſt, are inſtructed in the Principles, and Documents, of any Art, or Science,) yet we may have all imaginable Reaſon to be ſatisfied in the Veracity, and Integrity, of the Reporter, and ſo be able to give a good Reaſon why we believe what he hath told us; but if, either the Thing, teſtified to, be flatly contradictory to the Principles of right Reaſon, or the Speaker be unworthy of our Credit, we then ſuſpend our Faith, and believe nothing of it. This ſeemeth to me to be the general Nature of Faith. But then

2. I muſt conſider the ſpecial Nature of that Faith, which is required of us in the Goſpel, and that is, the firm Perſwaſion of the Mind of the Truth, and Certainty, of all that is revealed to us, in the Word of God; by which it is differenced from that Faith which is merely humane.

Humane Faith is, the Aſſent of the Mind to the Truth of what any Man hath told us, upon probable Evidence of his Knowledge of the Thing reported by him, and his Veracity in delivering himſelf to us according to his Knowledge, and without any Deſign of impoſing upon us; and as our Evidences, of the Truth of an humane Teſtimony, are more or leſs ſtrong, and concluſive, ſo our Faith will be firm, or wavering; and becauſe the fulleſt Evidence of the Truth of an humane Teſtimony, unattended with Divine Credentials, can amount to no more than a moral Certainty of the Ability, and Integrity, of the Speaker, which by no Means ſuppoſeth the Impoſſibility of it's being otherwiſe, ſo our Faith, of what is ſpoken, though it may be every Way ſufficient to influence us in our Practice, and Conduct, in all the Affairs of this World, yet, can be no more than the Mind's Aſſent to the very great Probability, not abſolute Certainty, of the Truth of the Thing ſpoken.

A Divine Faith, which is the Faith required of us as neceſſary to Salvation, is the Aſſent of the Mind to the Truth of a Thing ſpoken, upon a Divine Teſtimony, or becauſe God himſelf hath ſpoken it. And becauſe we have the higheſt Aſſurance of the Infallibility of God, that he cannot be deceived, and impoſed upon, with any wrong View, and Conception of Things, but has a moſt perfect Knowledge of them, as they truly are in their real Nature, and all their Circumſtances; and of his infinite Purity, and Veracity, which cannot poſſibly admit of his deſignedly impoſing upon us; therefore, upon having ſufficient Evidence of any Thing's being a Revelation from God, we have full Aſſurance, not of the Probability, but, of the abſolute Certainty of the Truth of the Thing ſo revealed, without the leaſt Grounds for Doubting, and Heſitancy; and the Mind here upon becometh firmly perſwaded, that what God hath ſpoken is infallibly true, though, at the ſame Time, ſhe cannot comprehend the Reaſon of the Thing revealed. This is the Faith which God requireth of us, and therefore hath he ſpoken to us; and upbraideth our Unbelief, ſaying, Numb. xiv. 11. *How long will ye provoke me? How long will it be e'er ye believe me?* It was well preſſed by *Jehoſhaphat*, King of *Judah*, 2 Chron. xx. 20. *Hear me, O Judah, and ye Inhabitants of Jeruſalem, Believe in the Lord your God.* And juſtly did the Apoſtle, for the Comfort of his Companions, upon what God had told him, ſay, Acts xxvii. 25. *I believe God.*

There is no one Principle in Nature, that carrieth clearer Evidence with it, and ſtriketh the Mind with greater Force, than this, That *God is true*; and it is utterly impoſſible that it ſhould be otherwiſe. The *Apoſtle* therefore maketh his Appeal to the common Sentiments of all Mankind, as well as aſſureth the Believer, of the abſolute Certainty of the Word, and Promiſe of God, ſaying,

Heb.

Heb. vi. 18. *It was impoſſible for God to lye.* And therefore, whatever Doctrines God is pleaſed to reveal to us, though ever ſo far tranſcending all that our Reaſon can poſſibly comprehend, our great Duty is, to pay this juſt Regard to the Authority, and Veracity, of the Speaker, as firmly to believe what he has ſpoken, becauſe he is infallibly true; and not firſt to ſearch into the Nature of the Doctrine, and credit, or reject, it according as we can underſtand the Myſtery contained in it, or no: for this is, not to believe what God ſaith, but, to believe the Report of our own Reaſon. Can nothing, I beſeech you, be true, but what thou underſtandeſt the Nature, and Reaſon of? Where is the Man that has ſo little Modeſty, and ſo much Ignorance, as to aſſert, or even ſuppoſe this! And what then, ſhould hinder the Divine Being from revealing ſuch Things to us, as are abſolutely true, and yet exceed the Power of our narrow Conceptions to underſtand them. Verily *the naked Word of God is as certain as a Demonſtration*, and more ſo, becauſe, poſſibly, a Man may be miſtaken in forming a Demonſtration, as many great Men have been; whereas the Word of God is infallibly true, and therefore more to be depended on than a Demonſtration. Reaſon muſt ſubmit to Faith, or give Place to it, in ſupernatural Things, which fall not within it's Sphere, but are above it; yet there is the higheſt Reaſon to credit the Truth of them, when God has revealed them: becauſe we owe the Submiſſion of our Minds to the Truth of a Revelation from God, as truly as the Subjection of our Wills to the Authority of his Precepts. And as God never will require it of us, to believe what he does not afford us ſufficient Evidence of it's being a Revelation from him, ſo neither will he ever require us to believe any farther than he hath ſeen Cauſe to reveal; and therefore, tho'

the

the Nature of the Thing revealed may remain a Myſtery to us, yet the Truth of it is what we are more ſpecially concerned with, as the Object of our Faith, and whatever lieth hid in the Nature of it doth not belong to us: for *ſecret Things belong unto the Lord our God, but thoſe Things which are revealed belong unto us.* Deut. xxix. 29. Thus the Truth of this Revelation, that *Jeſus Chriſt is the only begotten Son of God*, is all that we are concerned to believe; but how he is the only begotten Son of God, belongeth to us neither to know, nor believe; if it did God would have revealed it unto us.

This, then, is the great Thing demanded of us, to believe, credit, and yeild the Aſſent of our Minds, to the Truth of all that God hath ſpoken to us, in his Word, which he hath confirmed with the moſt inconteſtable Evidences of it's being a Revelation from him; Heb. ii. 4. *God himſelf bearing Witneſs*, to the firſt Publiſhers thereof, *both with Signs, and Wonders, and diverſe Miracles, and Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, according to his Will.* And therefore we are called upon, Mar. i. 15. *to believe the Goſpel;* to give Credit to all that God, in his Goſpel, hath ſpoken, and revealed to us.

This Faith, being the Aſſent, or Perſwaſion, of the Mind, founded upon divine Teſtimony, cannot, conſidered in Reference to the Object of it, admit of Degrees; becauſe all that God hath ſaid is equally infallibly true; but yet, conſidered as it is in us, ſo it admitteth of various Degrees, and is more or leſs ſtrong, and firm, according to the different Degrees of Evidence which we have, of ſuch a Thing's being a Revelation from God, and proportionably to the different Degrees of Application, which we make of the Evidences offered to us, to our own Minds. I ſhould proceed to a third Head, but muſt leave it to the Afternoon.

SERMON

SERMON X.

ACTS XVI. 30.

And ſaid, Sirs, What muſt I do to be ſaved ?

I Told you, that it is neceſſary that the Sinner reduce his Knowledge into Practice ; which includeth in it Faith, and Repentance. Under the Head of Faith, I ſhewed you, in the Morning, that Faith in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt comprehends in it, a ſerious and firm Perſwaſion of Mind of the Truth of all that is revealed concerning Chriſt, and the Way of Salvation by him ; where I conſidered the general Nature of Faith, and the more ſpecial Nature of that Faith required in the Goſpel.

3. I am now to conſider the more ſpecial Object of this Faith, namely, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the Way of Salvation by him. The general Object of our *Chriſtian* Faith is, indeed, the whole Word of God, even all that the Lord our God hath ſpoken to us, or all the Revelations which he hath made to us of his Mind, and Will, concerning us, and our Duty ; whether Predictions, Prophecies, Doctrines, Precepts, Promiſes, or Threatenings, to which I may add Hiſtories, which are contained in the

Canon

Canon of the Holy Scriptures, which have been ſpoken, and written, by holy Men of God, moved thereunto by the Holy Ghoſt: for *all Scripture is given by Inſpiration of God*; 2 Tim. iii. 16. and therefore all of it is to be believed: but the more ſpecial Object of our Faith, (and which I am more particularly concerned with in my Diſcourſe on the Subject before me,) as neceſſary unto Salvation, and which rendereth it a juſtifying, ſaving, Faith, is, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

There are two Things reſpecting Chriſt, conſidered as the ſpecial Object of this Faith, the Perſwaſion of the Mind, that fall under Conſideration, namely, that he is a Perſon ſent from God, and the ancient promiſed Meſſiah, and that all that he hath ſpoken is true.

Firſt, Thus Chriſt is the ſpecial Object of our Faith, as a Perſon ſent from God, upon which very much depends the Authority he aſſumed, and the Truth of what he affirmed, and taught; and therefore this was what he often inſiſted upon, and proved to his Hearers, that he was ſent from God. Joh. v. 36, 37. *The Works, which the Father hath given me to finiſh, the ſame Works that I do, bear Witneſs of me, that the Father hath ſent me: the Father himſelf, which hath ſent me, hath born Witneſs of me.* And this Chriſt not only endeavoured to convince the World of, but it is what he earneſtly deſired, and prayed for, Joh. xvii. 21. *that the World might believe that thou haſt ſent me.*

Beſides, Chriſt is the Object of our Faith, as that very Perſon who was promiſed, of old, to come into the World, under the Character of the *Meſſiah*, and Deliverer; and if the Marks, and Characters, of that very Perſon, given in the Writings of the ancient Prophecies, had not exactly agreed in him, and in him only, the Jews would not have been to blame for their rejecting him, and refuſing to own him to have been the

ancient

antient promiſed *Meſſiah* of God: but inaſmuch as all the evident Characters of the *Meſſiah* met in him, and in no other, therefore their Unbelief was juſtly chargeable upon them, and our Lord ſaid to them, Joh. viii. 24. *if ye believe not that I am he, ye ſhall die in your Sins.* He, that is *o erchomenos, He that was to come.* Matth. xi. 3. So that this is what we are to believe, and be perſwaded of in our Minds, that that very Perſon, promiſed firſtly to *Adam*, and then to *Abraham*, and afterwards to the People of God, in his ancient Records, under the Character of the *Meſſiah*, and Deliverer, has already come into the World, and Chriſt was he, and we look for no other. But then,

Secondly; We are to believe all that Jeſus Chriſt hath told us, concerning himſelf, and that the Doctrines which he has taught us are true. Thus we are to credit what he has told us concerning himſelf, eſpecially, that he is the Son of God, and the Saviour of the World. For thus Chriſt aſſerted, concerning himſelf, that he was the Son of God; and that not only, by Implication, in ſtiling God his Father, but in expreſs Terms, Matth. xxvii. 43. *He ſaid I am the Son of God:* and this we are to believe concerning him; one great Intention of the Goſpel being to lead us into the Faith hereof. Joh. xx. 31. *Theſe Things are written, that ye might believe, that Jeſus is the Chriſt,* (the promiſed *Meſſiah,*) *the Son of God, and that believing ye might have Life through his Name.*

And ſo are we to believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Saviour of Sinners. For this is couched in the very firſt Promiſe concerning him, and is often ſpoken of, in the Old Teſtament; and at his Birth the Angel proclaimed, Luk. ii. 11. *Unto you is born a Saviour, which is Chriſt, the Lord:* and he himſelf hath told us, Matth. xviii. 11. *The Son of Man,* (by which Stile Chriſt was well known,) *is come to ſave that which was loſt;* that is, to ſave loſt Sinners.

ners. And his Enemies flung it at him, in the Way of Scoff, Matth. xxvii. 42. *He ſaved others*; that is, He aſſumed this Character to himſelf, to be the *Saviour* of others. This then is what we are to believe concerning him, that *he is, indeed, the Chriſt, the Saviour of the World*; otherwiſe we ſhall never look to, and depend upon him, for Salvation.

But farther, we are to believe all that Chriſt hath told us, and all that is related in the Goſpel, concerning him, to be infallibly true; that there was ſuch a Perſon, as Jeſus Chriſt, who lived, and died, at *Jeruſalem*, in the Time, and after the Manner, recorded of him; that he taught ſuch Doctrines, and wrought ſuch Miracles, as we have an Account of in the Goſpel; that he died for our Offences, lay under the Power of Death for a Time, and then roſe again for our Juſtification; that he aſcended up into Heaven, and ever liveth to make Interceſſion for us; and that he will come again to Judge the Quick and the Dead. Theſe, and all that is contained in the Word of God, concerning Chriſt, and the Way of Salvation by him, we are to yield the Aſſent of our Underſtandings to, being firmly perſwaded in our Minds of the Truth of them all: and this Uſe, and Import, of the Word, Faith, is the firſt, and loweſt Degree, or perhaps Kind, of Faith in Chriſt, that is required of us in the Goſpel.

There are many who do not get thus far; tho' they have read, and heard, the Goſpel, and have had the Evidences, of it's being a Divine Revelation, plainly laid before them, yet they do not credit the Report, or aſſent to the Truth of it, as a Revelation from God, but, inſtead thereof, openly reject, and oppoſe it, and even ſtrain their feeble Powers to nullify it. So did the unbelieving *Jews* of Old, with whom the *Scepticks* of the preſent Age, join, in their Oppoſition to the Truth

of

of the Goſpel: though this is the firſt neceſſary Ingredient of our Faith in Chriſt, to credit what the Word of God has told us concerning him, and the Truth of the Doctrines he has taught us.

Though this is the general Notion of Faith in Chriſt, yet, this, alone, is not all that the Goſpel intendeth by that Faith in Chriſt which will ſave us, that Faith which, if a Man have, will entitle him to the Pardon of his Sins, and his final Acceptance with God, according to the true Meaning of the Phraſe, *He that believeth ſhall be ſaved.* For not only the *Devils thus believe and tremble*, Jam. ii. 19. and could ſay, Luk. iv. 34. *I know thee, who thou art; the holy one of God*; but we find many, who live under the Goſpel, and have their Minds, in ſome Meaſure, perſwaded of the Truth of the Divine Revelation, yet are far from being true Believers in Chriſt: their vicious, and immoral Lives plainly declare, that they are not *Believers*, in the Goſpel Senſe of the Word. They, therefore, who think this is all that the Goſpel intendeth, by Faith in Jeſus Chriſt, that the Underſtanding be convinced, in ſome Meaſure, of the Truth of the Things, concerning Chriſt, reported to them, and ſtop here, will certainly find this Faith will not ſave them; becauſe, with all this Faith in their Heads, they may remain, in their Hearts, and Lives, but as very Devils, and at a great Diſtance from Chriſt, and Salvation by him. Wherefore I proceed to ſay,

2. Faith in Jeſus Chriſt includeth in it, an entire Satisfaction with the Methods of Salvation, by him, propounded to us in the Word of God. A Man may be convinced of the Truth of what is told him, by ſuch ſtrong Arguments as ſhall ſilence all Cavilling, and take off the Force of every reaſonable Objection, while yet he is far from being ſatisfied with the Report, and from approving what he is even compelled to credit. Thus, a

Man,

Man may have an *hiſtorical* Faith in Chriſt, he may be forced by the Strength, and Clearneſs, of the Evidence ſet before him, to own the Truth of the Goſpel Hiſtory, in the General, and to credit, in particular, what it affirmeth concerning Chriſt, his Perſon, Miracles, Doctrines, Actions, and Sufferings; and yet, at the ſame Time, be no Ways ſatisfied with, or acquieſce in, the Methods of Divine Grace, which the infinitely wiſe, and good, God has fixed upon, as the only honorary, and effectual, Way, to bring about the eternal Salvation of guilty Sinners, by this Jeſus; but rather be fond of ſome Methods, and Schemes, of his own deviſing, which, he is ready to think, lay out a much nearer, and more agreeable, and rational, and ſafe, Way of Salvation, than that which is propoſed to him in the Goſpel. And becauſe he has a very great Fondneſs for his own Thoughts of Things, how different ſo ever from what is revealed, here he fixeth himſelf, this alone he approveth of, and all his Hopes, and Expectation, of Salvation, are founded upon this; and ſo he believeth, not according to what God hath revealed to him in his Word, but, according to the Reaſonings, and Sentiments, of his own Mind. This, now, is not to be a Believer in Chriſt, according to the Scripture Uſe of the Phraſe, but to be a Believer in ſelf, in his own Reaſon, and Underſtanding.

This, I am very much perſwaded, from what I have ſeen of their Writings, is the Condition of the Generality of the Infidels, and Deiſts, of the preſent Age. They are ſo prejudiced againſt the Methods of Salvation, by Jeſus Chriſt, revealed in the Goſpel, the Humility, and Self Denial, that is requiſite to be beholden to Chriſt, and receive all, they would hope for, in a Way of Grace, and Favour; and the Holineſs, and Purity of his Doctrines, that they cannot bring themſelves to approve,

prove, and acquieſce in, what ſeemeth to pour ſuch Contempt upon themſelves, and abridge them of their gratifying their moſt prevailing Appetites. They imagine they have found out a much nearer, and eaſier, Way to be happy; 'tis but to comply with the Dictates of Nature, uncorrected as it is, which they ſuppoſe to be the moſt rational Method that can be taken, and make no doubt but the Supream Being will be favourable to them. From theſe Prejudices, and their Fondneſs for their own Sentiments, and high Opinion of their own Performances, mean as they are, they are put upon finding Fault with the Goſpel Revelation, and lay hold on every little Objection, though ever ſo frivolous, and ſearch out Difficulties where there really are none, that, if poſſible, they may invalidate the Credibility of it; and all, not ſo much, becauſe they do not ſee ſufficient Reaſon to credit the Goſpel, as, becauſe they can by no Means approve what is ſo diſagreeable to the Haughtineſs of their Minds, and the Diſſoluteneſs of their Manners, However,

This, I conceive, was the Caſe of the *Jews*, when Chriſt was amongſt them; and therefore the *Apoſtle* ſaid of them, Rom. ix. 31, 32. *They attained not unto the Law of Righteouſneſs*; (they were not accepted of God as righteous, and ſo juſtified, and ſaved,) *wherefore?* (ſaid the *Apoſtle*, and he gave this Reaſon for it,) *Becauſe they ſought it not by Faith, but as it were by the Works of the Law; for they ſtumbled at that ſtumbling Stone.* They did not believe in Chriſt, becauſe they were offended at him. They miſſed of Salvation, not ſo much for want of an *hiſtorical* Faith, but becauſe they did not approve of the Way of Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt, they were prejudiced againſt him, and the Way of Salvation by him, and they thought it more reaſonable, and ſafe, for them to ſeek for Salvation, by the Law of *Moſes*, than by the

Goſpel of Chriſt. So that it was their Prejudice againſt the Perſon, and Doctrines, of Chriſt, and Want of approving the Grace of the Goſpel, that put them upon rejecting the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and not their Want of ſufficient Evidence, and Conviction, that he was truly ſent from God, and the ancient promiſed *Meſſiah.* Therefore our Lord upbraided them, ſaying, Joh. v. 43. *I am come, in my Father's Name, and ye receive me not; if another ſhall come, in his own Name, him ye will receive.* So when *Theudas*, and *Judas*, Acts v. 36, 37. came, in their own Names, pretending to be the Saviours of that People, to deliver them from the Oppreſſions of their temporal Enemies, many of them, readily received them; but when Chriſt came, with full Credentials from his Father, to ſave them out of the Hands of their ſpiritual Enemies, they received him not, becauſe they were prejudiced againſt his Perſon, and Doctrine.

The Evidences of Chriſt's Miſſion from the Father, and conſequently the Truth of what he taught them, ſhone in ſo full, and ſtrong, a Light upon them, that, though they did all they could to cloſe their Eyes, and ſhut out the Light from them, yet they could not help ſeeing ſomething of it, and acknowledging his Credentials; and therefore, when the *chief Prieſts*, and *Phariſees*, who were moſt inveterately ſet againſt him, were aſſembled together, to vent their Spite, and Rage, at him, and took Counſel together to put him to Death, the Force of Truth compelled them to own his Divine Miſſion, and ſay, Joh. xi. 47. *What do we; for this Man doth many Miracles.* And when the ſame Principles of Malice, and Rage, againſt our Lord, put them upon ſeverely threatening of his *Apoſtles*, and ſtraitly charging them, that they, hence forth, ſpeak to no Man in the Name of Chriſt, the Evidences of a Divine Power, accompanying their Miniſtry, forced them

to ſay, Acts iv. 16. *What ſhall we do to theſe Men! For that, indeed, a notable Miracle hath been done by them, is manifeſt unto all them that dwell in Jeruſalem, and we cannot deny it.*

From all which is appeareth, that even the wicked *Jews* themſelves had an hiſtorical Faith in Chriſt, for they could not but inwardly credit his Miſſion, when they thus owned his Miracles, becauſe herein they had the ſame Sort of Proof, and as ſtrong, for the Belief, that Jeſus Chriſt was ſent from God, as they had for *Moſes*. But their Prejudices againſt Chriſt, as a mean, and obſcure, Perſon, who did not head their Nation in all the Grandure of of a temporal Prince, as *Moſes* had done, nor work that Deliverance for them, from their outward Enemies, which they vainly expected from the *Meſſiah*, made them refuſe to own, and ſubmit to him. So that they were wilfully blind, even when they could not help ſeeing; they obſtinately rebelled againſt the Light, which ſhone forceably upon them; which occaſioned our Lord's charging their Sin, in not believing on him, upon their Obſtinacy, and Wilfulneſs; Joh. ix. 41. *Jeſus ſaid unto them, if ye were blind, ye ſhould have no Sin,* (that is, in not believing on him,) *but now ye ſay, we ſee, therefore your Sin remaineth*: for *ye will not come unto me, that ye may have Life.* Joh. v. 40.

True Faith in Jeſus Chriſt, therefore, neceſſarily includeth in it, a full Satisfaction of Mind in the whole Method, which God has ſeen meet, in his infinite Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, to fix upon, to bring a poor guilty, condemned, Sinner, to Life, and Happineſs, by the Incarnation, and Death, of his only begotten, and dearly beloved, Son. The great God has propoſed to gratify his own free, and rich Grace, in the Salvation of the guilty Sinner, not for the Sake of any Worthineſs in the Sinner, or of any Thing he can do to obtain it, but, in and by the Merits of his own Son, appear-

ing, on our Behalf, to offer himſelf, in our Nature, a Sacrifice of Atonement, to appeaſe the Divine Anger, and reconcile us unto God. Therefore God is ſaid, Rom. iii. 25. *to ſet him forth to be a Propitiation, through Faith in his Blood, for the Remiſſion of Sins that are paſt.* What is our Faith in his Blood? But, as, the Aſſent of the Mind to the Truth of it, that Chriſt has actually ſhed his Blood for us, ſo, the Soul's entire Acquieſcence in this wonderful Method of Divine Grace, and Satisfaction with the glorious Deſigns of Mercy, in God, to the Sinner, and Honour to himſelf, and Son, in this Way of ſaving him by the Sufferings, and Death, of Jeſus Chriſt.

Until all the Prejudices of the Soul againſt Jeſus Chriſt, and the Way of Salvation by him, are removed, and the Man acquieſces in this, as the Way of God's Appointment, let the Mind be ever ſo truly perſwaded of the Credibility of the Goſpel Revelation, the Sinner will never look to Chriſt, to be ſaved by him. Any other Way, that has not our Prejudices to ſtruggle with, though ever ſo falſe, will be acceptable to us; while that which is the only true Way of Salvation, and, perhaps, we cannot help thinking ſo, ſhall be rejected by us, while our Prejudices remain upon us. Thus the Cry of old was, Joh. xviii. 40. *Not this Man but Barrabas.*

In this Senſe, as denoting the Soul's Acquieſcence in the Divine Methods of Salvation, by Jeſus Chriſt his Meriting all for us by his Death, and not expecting of it from the Merits of any Works of our own, (I take it,) it is that *Faith* is oppoſed unto *Works*, (though it is never to be ſeperated from them,) in the Juſtification of a Sinner in the Sight of God. For, all the Works of moral Obedience that can be thought of, without the Underſtanding's Aſſent to the Truth of the Goſpel Revelation, and the Mind's approving the

Way

Way of Salvation which God hath, therein, marked out for us, will leave the Man at as great a Diſtance from Chriſt, and Salvation by him, as if there never had been any ſuch Perſon; whereas the Soul's Approbation of the Methods of Grace, revealed in the Goſpel, leads it to Chriſt, the Saviour, and is productive of good Works.

And yet, even this Aquieſcence, and Satisfaction, of Soul, in the Method of Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt, may go no farther than the Affections approving of it, and ſo is not comprehenſive of the whole of that Faith which the Goſpel requireth, as neceſſary to Salvation. Wherefore I go on to add,

3. Goſpel Faith includeth in it, an hearty Acceptance of, and Cloſure with, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as our Saviour, according to the Goſpel Offer. That is, the Soul becometh willing that Jeſus Chriſt, and he alone, ſhould be it's *Saviour*, and accordingly maketh Choice of him, as ſuch, and heartily, and thankfully, receiveth him, ſeriouſly dedicateth itſelf to him, to be redeemed by him, and to become his Servant forever, depending upon him for Righteouſneſs, and Salvation.

A Man may not only acknowledge the Truth, and Reality of a Thing, but ſee ſomething of it's Excellency, and be ſatisfied in the Goodneſs of it, in it's Place, and yet not look upon it as good, for him, and therefore never cloſe with it, or be at any Pains to ſecure it for his own. But when once the Soul is thorowly convinced of the Truth of a Thing, and that it is not only good in itſelf, but good for him, and is ſenſible that he cannot do well without it, that the Enjoyment of it is neceſſary to conſtitute his own Happineſs, then the Soul, not only is carried out in it's earneſt Deſires, and Labours, after it, but, upon the firſt Opportunity, willingly parts with all leſſer Intereſts for the Sake of it, readily lays hold upon it, cloſes

with it, and ſecureth a ſpecial Propriety in it. This is the natural Acting of the reaſonable Mind, with Relation unto all that it apprehendeth to be good for it.

Thus it is here; When the Mind is thorowly convinced of the Truth of the *Chriſtian* Religion, and approves of the Methods of Divine Grace, revealed in the Goſpel, and ſeeth that this is a moſt excellent, and the only ſure, Way of Salvation, becauſe what the infinite Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, of God hath choſen, and laid out for us, then the next Act of the Soul is to cloſe in with this Way, and, accordingly, to receive Jeſus Chriſt, as freely offered to us in the Goſpel: and becauſe the Soul is ſenſible that her everlaſting Well-being is dependent upon her Intereſt in this Salvation, therefore ſhe will begrutch no Labour, and Pains, nor count any of the little Intereſt of Fleſh, and Senſe, and this World, too much to part with to obtain it. Hence it is ſaid, Rom. x. 10. *With the Heart, Man believeth unto Righteouſneſs.* That is with the active governing Power of the Soul, the Will. The Faith that juſtifieth, and ſaveth us, is not ſeated only in the Head, much leſs in the Feet only, but in the Heart; which implieth the Conſent of the Will, concurring with the Aſſent of the Underſtanding, and the Approbation of the Affections, in accepting the gracious Offers of the Goſpel. And when this governing Power of the Soul, the Will, thus cloſeth with the Way of Salvation, ſet before us in the Word of God, and ſincerely receiveth, and heartily ſubmitteth, to Jeſus Chriſt, as our alone Saviour, then is the Man a true Believer, in the Goſpel Senſe, and has that Faith, like our Father *Abraham*, which *is imputed to him for Righteouſneſs.* Rom. iv. 22.

But it muſt be obſerved, that this Cloſing with the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as our Saviour, muſt be in the Way, and upon the Terms, of the Goſpel,

that

that is to say, in that Way, and upon those Terms, which God hath appointed; for it cannot be supposed, that the great God, who is Sovereign of his own Favours, will save any Man, but in his own Way, and upon his own Terms. And because the Condition of the Sinner is, that of a guilty, ignorant, impotent, Creature, alienated from the Life of God, a Stranger to the Way of Peace, and without Strength, either to overcome his Enemies, perform his Duties, or to lay hold on eternal Life, therefore it hath pleased God, in great Wisdom, and Condescention to furnish the Lord Jesus Christ, as our great Redeemer, with all those Qualifications which are adapted to our Condition, that he might effectually accomplish the whole of our Salvation: and, consequently, our Faith must necessarily have it's Respect to Christ, under the Consideration of those special Qualifications, in order to our partaking of his Salvation.

Since, therefore, God hath sent his Son, under the Character, and with the Qualification, of the *great high Priest of our Profession*, by the offering of himself a Sacrifice for our Sin, and pleading our Cause, to make up the Breach between God and Man, and reconcile us to God, and God unto us, our Faith in Christ must include in it, our Closure with him in the Character of a Priest; that is, the hearty Consent of our Souls that Christ should be all that unto us, that any Priest can be, and our Reliance upon the Merits of his Atonement, and the Prevalency of his Intercession, to slay the Enmity, and reconcile us, in one Body, unto God. Thus he is the *Propitiation for our Sin, through Faith in his Blood*; Rom. v. 9, 10. that, *being justified, through his Blood, we may be saved from Wrath, through him; for, if when we were Enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the Death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his Life.*

And becauſe God hath, in theſe laſt Days, ſpoken to us by his Son, a *Prophet mighty in Word, and Deed*, whom he hath ſent to teach, and inſtruct, Sinners in their Duty, and the Way of Peace, and Life, by his holy Doctrines, and moſt exemplary Walk, therefore our Faith in Chriſt neceſſarily includeth in it, our Cloſure with him under the Character of a Prophet, who hath faithfully revealed to us the Will of the Father; that is, our hearty Conſent to be taught, and inſtructed by him, and ſincere reſigning of ourſelves up to the Directions of his Word, and Conduct of his Spirit; and ſo that we *call no Man Maſter, for one is our Maſter, even Chriſt.* Matth. xxiii. 10.

Farther, ſince God hath given him to be Head over all Things, to his Church, and *ſet him as King upon his holy Hill of Zion*, to rule in the midſt of his Enemies, to give Law to his People, to communicate all divine Influences to them, and confer the promiſed Bleſſedneſs upon them; therefore our Faith in Chriſt neceſſarily includeth in it, our hearty Cloſure with him under the Character of a King, whoſe Kingdom is, not of this World, but, ſpiritual, and heavenly, intending the ſubduing of our Luſt, the Maſtery over our Appetites, the preparing of us, by a Life of Holineſs, for, and at laſt bringing of us to, a Life of conſummate Happineſs, in the heavenly World; that is, that we yield the hearty Conſent of our Souls that Chriſt ſhould ſet up his Kingdom in us, and rule over us, and that we pay that Homage, and Subjection, which is due to him as our Lord, by our ready hearkening to his Voice, obeying his Commands, and following of him, and by our depending upon him, and ſeeking to him, for all Divine Influences, to enable us to reſiſt Temptations, perform Duties, and to perſevere in the Way of Well-doing, and to confer the Crown of Glory upon us. Thus, Acts ii. 36. *We are to know, aſſuredly,*

that

that God hath made this ſame Jeſus both Lord, and Chriſt.

This is what, I ſuppoſe, is intended by that Expreſſion, in the Writings of many Divines, a Cloſure with a whole Chriſt.

I muſt obſerve farther, that the Goſpel propoſes no other Saviour to us but Chriſt alone; it acquainteth us with no other, but the Incarnate Son of God, as equal to the great Work of ſaving a Soul from Sin, and Satan, from Death, and Hell, and bringing of it to God, and Happineſs; ſo that Chriſt will admit of no Competitor, nor ſuffer any of this Glory, which belongeth to him alone, to be given to another; and therefore in our Cloſing with Chriſt, we muſt ſincerely renounce, all Dependance upon any other, whether Saint, or Angel, and all Ability, and Self-ſufficiency, of our own, either to merit Pardon, and Life, or to deliver ourſelves from the Tyranny of our ſpiritual Enemies, the Hands of Divine Juſtice, and the condemning Power of the Law, or to confer thoſe gracious Qualifications upon ourſelves which make us meet for the heavenly Inheritance; and muſt make Mention of his Name, and his Righteouſneſs, even of his only, knowing *there is Salvation in no other, for there is none other Name, under Heaven, given among Men, whereby we muſt be ſaved.* Acts iv. 12.

Thus, there muſt be a Cloſing with Chriſt, a whole Chriſt, and none but Chriſt.

And now, after all the Diſputes, that have greatly divided the *Chriſtian* World into Parties, about a juſtifying, ſaving Faith, the particular Act, and the critical Mode of the Acting, of Faith; and whether Faith is an Inſtrument, or a Condition, of our Juſtification; and under what particular Conſiderations Chriſt is the Object of a juſtifying Faith; or about whatever other Nicety, concerning Faith, it's Object, and Operation,

learned

learned Men may employ their Thoughts, and puzzle the Minds of others; I am verily perſwaded, that I have given a juſt, and plain, Account of that true ſaving, juſtifying Faith in Chriſt, which is ſo much ſpoken of in the New-Teſtament, and is ever intended, when we are there told, *He that believeth ſhall be ſaved*, and that a *Man is juſtified by Faith*, and the like Expreſſions: which do not mean a particular Act of any one diſtinct Power of the Soul, only; but intend the Acting of the whole Soul, and all it's Powers; the Underſtanding, in crediting the Truth of the Goſpel Revelation, relating to Jeſus Chriſt; the Affections, in their Approbation of the Methods of the Grace of God by him; and the Will in it's Choice of, and Cloſure with, Jeſus Chriſt, as our alone Saviour, in all his mediatorial Offices: and in whom ſoever this Faith is found, I doubt not but that Perſon will be finally juſtified, and ſaved.

And if we do but ſeriouſly attend to the true Scope of the Goſpel Account of this Matter, we ſhall plainly ſee, that the Word *Faith*, when referred to Chriſt as the Object of it, and as denoting the Way unto Salvation by him, is always to be underſtood in this Senſe. Sometimes indeed, we find it denoteth the Act of ſome particular Power of the Soul, as when our Lord ſaid to the *Jews*, Joh. x. 38. *Though ye believe not me, believe the Works*, &c. which evidently meaneth their crediting of him, if not for his Word, yet for his Works Sake. Thus alſo he ſaid, Joh. v. 44. *How can ye believe which receive Honour one of another, and ſeek not the Honour which cometh from God only?* which plainly referreth to the Prejudice of their Affections, and Fondneſs for worldly Things, which occaſioned their Want of an entire Acquieſcence in the Methods of Divine Grace. But when the Scriptures ſpeak of believing *in*, or *on*, Chriſt, in order to Salvation, they always intend the

the Act of the Will, together with the Underſtanding, and Affections; and therefore thoſe Phraſes are explained by that of our receiving him. Joh. i. 12. *To as many as received him, ---- even to them that believe on his Name.* Hence Faith in Chriſt is often, in Scripture, called a *Coming* to him: Joh. vi. 35. *He that cometh to me ſhall never hunger, he that believeth on me ſhall never thirſt*; all of which do moſt ſtrongly imply the Act of the Will in our Choice of, and Cloſure with, Chriſt; that we come to him, and receive him, as Diſciples to their Maſter, as Criminals to their Surety, and Advocate, as Subjects to their Lord, and King; that by our thus coming to him, and believing on him, he may of God be made unto us Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs, Sanctification, and Redemption.

Thus I have endeavoured, as clearly as I could, to ſet before you the Nature of that Faith which is required of us in the Goſpel, even that Faith in Jeſus Chriſt, which whoſoever has, may upon good Grounds hope, that God, for Chriſt's Sake, will pardon, and juſtify, and eternally ſave him. I ſhould go on to evidence the Neceſſity of this Faith, but I will conclude at preſent, by ſaying,

USE. Take heed, every Soul, of deluding yourſelves with a falſe Faith. Many have done ſo before you, and you are not out of Danger of being deceived to your utter undoing. I beſeech you, therefore, be very careful in this important Affair, upon which all your eternal Salvation turneth. Don't imagine that your Faithfulneſs, Fidelity, or moral Honeſty, in what you do, and ſay, is a ſaving Faith; for though theſe, as the weightier Matters of the Law, are called Faith, Matth. xxiii. 23. *Judgment, Mercy, and Faith*, yet this is no more than a moral Heathen, who never heard of Chriſt, may be Owner of. Don't reſt in an hiſtorical Faith, that you believe the Reports of the Goſpel, for though this be a true Faith, yet

it is not all the Faith the Goſpel requireth, in order to Salvation; this, doubtleſs, was the Faith of *Simon Magus*, of whom it is ſaid, Acts viii. 13, 23. *that he believed*, and yet that he was *in the Gall of of Bitterneſs, and Bond of Iniquity*. Neither delude yourſelves with a temporary Faith, which may ſomewhat engage the Affections to like and approve what the Goſpel maketh known to you; for ſo the ſtony Ground Hearers *receive the Word with Joy*; Mat. xii. 20. and *Herod heard John gladly*, Mark vi. 20. Be not deceived with a particular Faith that your Sins are all pardoned; for though this may be the joyful Portion of him that has heartily accepted, and ſubmitted himſelf, to, Jeſus Chriſt, yet, without the Evidences of this eſpouſal between Chriſt, and the Soul, 'tis no better than a vain Preſumption, and deluſive Self-Confidence. Yea, if you had the Faith of Miracles, ſo that you could remove Mountains, yet, without cloſing with Chriſt, your Condition would be no better than that of *Judas*, to whom our Lord gave Commiſſion, as well as to the other Eleven, Matth. x. 8. *To heal the Sick, cleanſe the Lepers, and raiſe the Dead.* See to it therefore that your whole Heart, and Soul ſincerely embrace the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, according to the Offer, and upon the Terms of the Goſpel, and reſign yourſelves wholly up to him, to the Government of his Righteous Sceptre; then may you conclude that your Faith is right, and ſuch as God in his Word requireth of you: for he is thy Lord, and if thou thus Worſhip him, he will greatly delight in thy Beauty, and thou ſhalt receive the Bleſſing from the Lord, and Righteouſneſs from the God of thy Salvation. For ſo hath Chriſt ſaid, Joh. x. 27, 28. *My Sheep hear my Voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I will give unto them eternal Life, and they ſhall never periſh; neither ſhall any Man pluck them out of my Hand.*

SERMON

SERMON XI.

ACTS XVI. 30.

And said, Sirs, What must I do to be saved?

THE Doctrine I have noted, from these Words, was,

Doc. It is of the highest Concernment to perishing Sinners, to be very solicitous, what they shall do to be saved; or, to know, and practise, all that is necessary, in order to their Salvation. The Method, I proposed to take, in the prosecuting this Subject, was this.

I. To shew you what it is to be saved; or, what is that Salvation which perishing Sinners stand in Need of.

II. To evidence that perishing Sinners may be saved; or, there is a Possibility, notwithstanding their present miserable Condition, that they may be eternally saved.

III. That perishing Sinners must know, and practise, all that is necessary, in order to their Salvation; or, there is something to be done, by them, that they may be saved.

IV. This

IV. This is a Matter of the higheſt Concernment to them, and therefore they ought to be moſt ſeriouſly ſolicitous about it. I am upon the Third of theſe Heads; viz.

III. That periſhing Sinners muſt know, and practiſe, all that is neceſſary, in order to their Salvation; or, there is ſomething to be done, by them, that they may be ſaved. Under this Head I have propoſed to conſider, the Nature, and Neceſſity, of ſaving Faith, and the Way to obtain it.

The laſt Opportunity I ſhewed you, what it is to believe in Jeſus Chriſt, what that Faith in Chriſt is, which the Goſpel requireth, as neceſſary to Salvation; namely,

1. A ſerious, and firm Perſwaſion of Mind concerning the Truth, and Certainty, of all that is revealed to us, in the Word of God, relating to Jeſus Chriſt, and the Way of Salvation, by him.

2. An entire Satisfaction with the Methods of Salvation, by him, propounded to us in the Word of God.

3. An hearty Acceptance of, and Cloſure with, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as our *Saviour*, according to the Goſpel Offer. Having, under theſe Three Heads, ſhewed you what I verily think to be the true Nature of that Goſpel Faith, which, if a Man have, he ſhall be pardoned, juſtified, and eternally ſaved; I now proceed in the Second Place,

II. To evidence, that this Faith in Chriſt, which the Goſpel requireth, is abſolutely neceſſary to the Sinner's Salvation. This will be abundantly evident, by conſidering the Tenor of the Goſpel Revelation, and the Nature, and Reaſon of Things.

1. It is very evident from the whole Tenor of the plain, and poſitive Declaration of the Goſpel, that this Faith in Jeſus Chriſt, is abſolutely neceſſary to the Salvation of the Sinner. The

whole

whole Goſpel is an utter Stranger to any Way, of a poor guilty Sinner's partaking of the Salvation, he ſtandeth in Need of, without this, of his believing on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; if you ſearch from one End to the other of it, you will find no Encouragement given, to any Sinner, to hope that he may be ſaved, without this Faith in Chriſt, which I have deſcribed. The very End, and Deſign, of the Goſpel Revelation, are to make known Jeſus Chriſt, his Perſon, Nature, Offices, and Benefits, and to ſhew us the Methods of Salvation, by him; to ſet before us the wondrous Grace of God, in the Gift of his Son, to be a Saviour for us, guilty Sinners; to acquaint us what Chriſt has done, and ſuffered for us, to bring about our Salvation; and to proſelyte us to the Faith of the Son of God, that, by him, we might be ſaved. But to be more particular.

1. The whole Goſpel does moſt poſitively inſiſt upon our Faith in Chriſt, in order to our Salvation. Chriſt himſelf, perſonally, and his *Apoſtles*, in Commiſſion, and Charge, from him, conſtantly preached this Doctrine, and urged it upon their Hearers, that they muſt believe that they might be ſaved. Thus,

1. Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, perſonally, preached the Neceſſity of this Faith, in order to Salvation. Our bleſſed Lord upon the Confinement of *John* in Priſon, began his publick Miniſtry, with preaching the Neceſſity of Faith, as one of the great Duties of Chriſtianity, upon which the regular Hope of Salvation is built. Mark i. 14, 15. *Now, after that John was put in Priſon, Jeſus came into Galilee, preaching the Goſpel of the Kingdom of God; and ſaying, the Time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at Hand, repent ye, and believe the Goſpel.* This is the peculiar Grace, and Demand, of the Goſpel, the Word of the Kingdom, that Men ſhould believe in the *Meſſiah*, who, in the Fulneſs of

of Time, came into the World, for this very Purpoſe, to ſet up the Kingdom of God among them, as a Specimen of, and Preparation for, the Kingdom of Glory, in Heaven; which Grace, and Demand, the Law, as contradiſtinct from the Goſpel, was an utter Stranger to. The Law, or Covenant of Works, (that is, that Diſpenſation wherein the Great God tranſacted with Man, before the Fall, and ſhewed him, upon what Conditions, he might enjoy his Favour, or incur his Diſpleaſure,) runneth in theſe Terms, *Do, and Live, Diſobey, and Die*: by a perſonal, perfect, and perpetual, Obedience to every *Iota* of the Divine Commandment, innocent Man might have obtained an Eſtabliſhment in the Favour of God, and have enjoyed an everlaſting Life. But this, we have ſeen, is impoſſible unto fallen Man, and would not avail him, to merit Heaven, if he could, now, yield ſuch an Obedience. Whereas the whole Tenor of the Goſpel Diſpenſation, (wherein God tranſacteth with Man, after the Fall, and which layeth the Foundation of our future Happineſs in the perfect Obedience, and expiatory Sufferings, of a Mediator, and Surety, and is therefore ſtiled a Covenant of Grace,) runneth in theſe Terms, *Believe, and Live*; believe in that Mediator, and Surety, that you may obtain Life through him. This is what the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, when he tabernacled among Men, in Fleſh, conſtantly preached, ſaying, Joh. iii. 16, 18. *God ſo loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting Life: ---- He that believeth on him is not condemned.* And ſo you find him ſaying to *Martha*, Joh. xi. 25, 26. *He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live: whoſoever liveth, and believeth on me, ſhall never die.* Hence Chriſt ſaid to the Man, whom he had cured of his Blindneſs from his Birth, Joh. ix. 35. *Doeſt*

thou

thou believe on the Son of God? And when the *Jews* came to our Lord, ſeemingly very ſolicitous to know what they muſt do to be ſaved; *what* (ſay they,) Joh. vi. 28, 29. *ſhall we do, that we might Work the Work of God?* That is, that Work which God requireth of us, which is peculiarly pleaſing to God, and by which we may hope to obtain the Divine Favour: our Lord, in Anſwer to their Enquiry, telleth them, *This is the Work of God*, what God ſpecially inſiſteth upon, *that ye believe on him, whom he hath ſent.* Hence Chriſt ſaid, to his Diſciples, Joh. xvi. 1. *Ye believe in God, believe alſo in me.* Our bleſſed Lord wrought his miraculous Works on Purpoſe that the People might believe on him; therefore he ſaid to the *Jews*, Joh. xii. 36. *While ye have Light, believe in the Light*, which ſpecially referreth to the Light of Conviction, which the Miracles of Chriſt carried with them, that he was ſent from God, the promiſed *Meſſiah*, and the *Saviour* of the World; as is evident from what followeth ℣. 37. *But tho' he had done ſo many Miracles before them, yet they believed not on him.* And,

2. Jeſus Chriſt gave it in ſtrict Charge to his *Apoſtles*, (and ſo to his Miniſters after them,) to preach this great Goſpel Duty, the Faith of Chriſt, to the World; and this is one of the great Things they have inſiſted upon, in all their Writings. After our Lord was riſen from the Dead, and was about to aſcend up into Heaven, he gave his plenary Commiſſion to his *Apoſtles*, and in it ſtrongly enjoined it upon them to preach to the World the abſolute Neceſſity of believing in him; for this was the Intent of what he ſaid, Mark xvi. 15, 16. *Go ye into all the World, and preach the Goſpel to every Creature; he that believeth, and is baptiſed, ſhall be ſaved.* And accordingly they made it their great Buſineſs, from which no Threatenings, nor Sufferings, could ever diſcourage them,

faithfully to preach Chriſt, and the Neceſſity of Faith in him, wherever they went. How often do we find this inculcated in the *Acts* of the *Apoſtles*. Acts x. 42, 43. *He*, that is, Chriſt, *commanded us to preach unto the People*; ---- *to him give all the Prophets Witneſs, that through his Name, whoſoever believeth in him, ſhall receive Remiſſion of Sins.* Acts xiii. 38, 39. *Be it known unto you, Men, and Brethren, that, through this Man,* (Chriſt,) *is preached unto you, the Forgiveneſs of Sins; and, by him, all that believe are juſtified from all Things, from which ye could not be juſtified by the Law of Moſes. And the Word of God encreaſed, and the Number of the Diſciples multiplied, and a great Company of the Prieſts were obedient to the Faith.* Acts vi. 7. *And as many, as were ordained to eternal Life, believed.* Acts xiii. 48. Thus they *teſtified both to Jews, and alſo to the Greeks, Faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Acts xx. 20. And this is mentioned as the direct, and plain, Anſwer of the *Apoſtle*, to the *Jaylor*'s Enquiry; Acts xvi. 31. *And they ſaid, believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved.* This Doctrine of Salvation by Faith in Jeſus Chriſt, they conſtantly aſſerted, and preached, notwithſtanding all the Oppoſition they met withal; and when the *Jewiſh* Council forbad them to teach any more in the Name of Jeſus, they boldly ſay to them, Acts v. 29. *We ought to obey God rather than Men*; and *when they departed from the Preſence of the Council,* ---- *they daily, in the Temple, and in every Houſe, ceaſed not to teach, and preach, Jeſus Chriſt:* ℣. 41, 42. and *Believers were the more added to the Lord, Multitudes both of Men, and Women.* ℣. 14. And you may obſerve the ſame Strain running through all the Apoſtolical *Epiſtles*. Rom. i. 16, 17. *The Goſpel of Chriſt is the Power of God, to the Salvation of every one that believeth, to the Jew firſt, and alſo to the Greek*; ---- *for the juſt ſhall live by Faith.* Rom. iii. 26. *That he might be juſt, and the Juſtifier of him*

him which believeth in Jeſus. 1 Cor. i. 21, 23. *It pleaſed God, by the Fooliſhneſs of preaching, to ſave them that believe;---- we preach Chriſt crucified,* &c. Gal. vi. 16. and iii. 22. *We have believed in Jeſus Chriſt, that we might be juſtified by the Faith of Chriſt: that the Promiſe, by Faith of Jeſus Chriſt, might be given to them that believe.* Eph. i. 12, 14. *Who firſt truſted in Chriſt, ---- in whom, alſo, after that ye believed, ye were ſealed with the Holy Spirit of Promiſe, which is the Earneſt of our Inheritance.* So I might go on, through all the *Epiſtles*, to quote to you ſuch Paſſages as ſhew the Neceſſity of Faith in Chriſt; but I ſhall content myſelf with turning you to one Text more, which ſheweth us, that this Faith in Chriſt is ſo ſtrongly, and peremptorily, inſiſted on, as if all the other Commands of the Goſpel was ſummed up, and contained, in this, and this were the whole of what God required of us; The Place I refer to is in the *firſt Epiſtle of John*, iii. 23. where the *Apoſtle* obſerveth the very great Streſs laid upon this Duty, and ſaith, *This is his Commandment, that we ſhould believe on the Name of his Son, Jeſus Chriſt.*

Now, that all of this Faith, and Believing, in Jeſus Chriſt; which was preached, and urged, as neceſſary to Salvation, by Chriſt, and his *Apoſtles*, meaneth no other than that Faith which I have deſcribed, is very evident from the Account which the holy Scriptures give us of the Faith of *Abraham*, the Father of the Faithful. For, when God firſt called *Abraham* out of *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, to go unto a Land which he would ſhew him, and promiſed to make of him a great Nation, and to bleſs him, *Abraham believed God*; That is, he was firmly perſwaded of the Truth of all that God had ſaid to him; nextly, he was reconciled to, and acquieſced in, what God propoſed to him, laying aſide all his Prejudices againſt leaving his Country, and Kindred, and travelling to a ſtrange Place;

and, then, he alſo cloſed with the Propoſal, by yielding a ready Obedience to the heavenly Voice, *and departed, as the Lord had ſpoken to him.* Gen. xii. 1---4. When, after that *Abraham* had gone Childleſs, until he, and *Sarah*, his Wife were well ſtricken in Years, God renewed his Covenant with him, and promiſed him a Son, by *Sarah*; Gen. xvii. 16. *Abraham believed God*, being fully perſwaded of the Truth of what God had ſaid to him. And when their Son *Iſaac* was grown up to be a young Man, God, to try *Abraham*, commanded him to offer him up a Sacrifice upon Mount *Moriah*; here was the Teſt of *Abraham*'s Faith; his Faith ſtill held out, he credited what God had ſaid, and was firmly perſwaded that the Promiſe ſhould be made good to him, even in this very *Iſaac*; and he overcame all the Prejudices, that might ariſe in his Breaſt, againſt the offering of him up, even with his own fatherly Hand; and he yielded a ready Compliance with the Divine Command, and ſo heartily cloſed with what God demanded of him; he took his Son, the Wood, the Fire, and the Knife, and went up to the Mount, built an Altar, laid the Wood in Order, bound his Son, and laid him upon the Pile, and, with the Knife in his outſtretched Hand, was going to execute the Divine Command, in the utmoſt Extent of it, when, lo, a counter Order ſtayed his Arm, and God provided a Ram, for a Sacrifice, in the Room of his Son. This is that Faith which *Abraham* is ſo famous for; Rom. iv. 20, 21, 22. *He ſtaggered not at the Promiſe of God, through Unbelief, but was ſtrong in Faith, giving Glory to God; and being fully perſwaded, that, what he had promiſed, he was able alſo to perform; and therefore it was imputed to him for Righteouſneſs.* Thus *was Abraham, our Father, juſtified by Works, when he had offered Iſaac, his Son, upon the Altar; ſeeſt thou how Faith wrought with his Works, and by*

Works

Works was Faith made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which ſaith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for Righteouſneſs. Jam. ii. 21, 22, 23. But, beſides all this,

2. The Goſpel does moſt plainly aſſure us, that there can be no Salvation for us, without Faith in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. The Goſpel not only poſitively inſiſteth upon our Faith in Chriſt, that we may be ſaved, but it does alſo, in very full, and ſtrong Terms, aſſure us, that the Condition of thoſe who believe not will be very contrary to that of being ſaved. So ſaid our Lord, Joh. iii. 18. *He that believeth not is condemned already, becauſe he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God.* and *John* ſays, ℣. 36. *He that believeth not the Son, ſhall not ſee Life; but the Wrath of God abideth on him.* Hence alſo Chriſt told the unbelieving *Jews*, Joh. viii. 24. *If ye believé not that I am he, ye ſhall die in your Sins;* and he acquainted them, Joh. xvi. 9. that when the Spirit is come, *he will reprove*, or convince, *the World of Sin, becauſe they believe not on me.* And when he ſent forth his Diſciples, with a Fulneſs of Power, to preach his Goſpel to every Creature, not to *Jews* only, but to the *Gentiles* alſo, he commiſſioned them to declare it, to all the World, what are the Terms of a Sinner's Salvation, and that he inſiſteth upon it, that they believe in him, and that, without coming up to theſe Terms, all their Hopes of Salvation would be vain: Mar. xvi. 16. *He that believeth not ſhall be damned.* And we are told, 2 Theſſ. ii. 12. *that they all might be damned, who believe not the Truth*; and are aſſured, Luk. xii. 46. that the *Portion of Unbelievers* will be very miſerable; and that *the unbelieving ſhall have their Part in the Lake which burneth with Fire, and Brimſtone.* Rev. xxi. 8.

So that this is the Term, Condition, Propoſal, Demand, (call it what you will,) of the Goſpel, upon which God will accept the Sinner to Mercy,

freely pardon all his Sins, and receive him unto eternal Life, and without which he will have no Favour for him: we can therefore aſſure you, from our great Lord, and Maſter, that if you will comply with this Demand, and thus believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, you ſhall be ſaved; but and if you will not you ſhall be damned. There will be no Poſſibility of your being ſaved from Sin, and Wrath, according to the whole Scope of the Goſpel Revelation, without Faith in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. And then,

2. It is farther evident, from the Reaſon, and Nature, of Things, that this Faith in Jeſus Chriſt, is abſolutely neceſſary to a Sinner's being ſaved. I only now ſuppoſe there was ſuch a Perſon as Jeſus Chriſt, who lived a certain Time in this World, and then offered up himſelf a Sacrifice unto God, for this very End to ſave poor periſhing Sinners, and that there is Salvation in no other Name. Upon theſe Suppoſitions, which are plain and evident Truths of the Goſpel, and which therefore I need not now labour in the Proof of, we may very well argue, and juſtly conclude, that no Perſon, that liveth under the Goſpel, can poſſibly be ſaved, without the Faith in Chriſt I am ſpeaking of.

For, How is it poſſible that any Man ſhall finally obtain Favour with God, who maketh God a Lyar? 1 Joh. v. 10. *He that believeth not God, hath made him a Lyar, becauſe he believeth not the Record that God gave of his Son.* Will God put up ſuch an Indignity, and cheriſh, in the Arms of his Love, him, that not only has offered him the greateſt Inſult, but continueth thus to ſpit in his Face? Or can any Man be the better, as to his eternal Intereſt, for the Incarnation, and Death, of the Son of God, who, though he has the Opportunity of receiving the cleareſt Conviction of the Truth of the Goſpel Hiſtory, yet, does not ſo much credit it, as to be-

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lieve that there ever was any ſuch Perſon as Jeſus Chriſt, who taught ſuch Doctrines, wrought ſuch Miracles, ſuffered ſuch Indignities, and was crucified at *Jeruſalem*, as are recorded of him; and much leſs believeth him to be the Son of God, and *Saviour* of the World? No, moſt certainly: becauſe all that Chriſt is, and all that he hath done, and ſuffered, are, to ſuch, a perfect Nullity; His very Perſon has no Being, in their Eſteem, nor ever had, becauſe they do not believe the Truth of it, that there ever was ſuch a Perſon. Or, if they grant ſo much, that poſſibly there has been a Perſon in the World of that Name, at the Time, and Place, ſpecified, and that he lived, and died after the manner as is affirmed; yet, inaſmuch as his Character, the Son of God, and *Saviour* of Sinners, and ſo the grand Intention of his Life, and Death, is utterly disbelieved, and looked upon, by them, as a mere *Chimæra*, and the vain Whims of a deluded Fancy; therefore they can never look to him for Salvation, nor ever be willing to accept any he ſhould make the Offer of to them; nay, they would deſpiſe it all, as an idle Dream. So that from the Reaſon, and Nature, of Things, a crediting the Reports of the Goſpel is abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation.

And ſo is our unprejudiced affecting of, and acquieſcing in, the Methods of Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt. For, ſuppoſe a Man ſhould ſo far credit the Hiſtory of the Goſpel, as to put it upon the ſame footing with the Works of *Socrates*, or *Cæſar*, as to his believing, upon probable Evidence, that there was ſuch a Perſon, who ſaid, and did, ſuch Things, as are reported concerning Jeſus Chriſt; yet, can it be imagined, that God will diſpenſe with the Glory of his Wiſdom, and Power, and ineffable Love, of his Holineſs, and Rectitude, manifeſted in the Salvation of a Sinner, by the Incarnation, and Death, of his own Son, and be

willing to look upon this amazing Effect of his infinite Underſtanding, and boundleſs Goodneſs, as nothing, and leſs than nothing, only that, after all, he might ſave a poor, guilty, periſhing Creature, whom he could make forever miſerable by a Word's ſpeaking, who can, by no Means, be prevailed with to acquieſce in, and approve of, the Method of Salvation, which God himſelf has laid out, and acquainted him with, in his holy Word; but deſigns, and hopes, to get to Heaven in ſome other Way, which, perhaps, he likes better, as being more agreeable to his preſent Conception of Things, and ſuited to his corrupt vicated Inclination? That is to ſay, Is it fitting that God ſhould lay aſide his own admirable Contrivance, every Way adjuſted to the Rights of his Nature, and Dominion, and to the Condition, and Circumſtances, of the Creature, to gratify the peeviſh Humour of the Sinner, and ſave him in that Way, only, which his weak Reaſon, or raging Luſts, think to be beſt? Verily, a Man, of but low Underſtanding, would be put to no difficulty to determine, how unfitting, how unreaſonable this would be. And we may be ſure of it, that God will have the Sinner to know, that he ſhall be ſaved in a Way of the Divine Appointment, or not at all. If God's Way will not pleaſe him, he may be ſure that his own Way will not be pleaſing to God. It is the higheſt Reaſon, that our finite Underſtandings ſhould give Place to the infinite Underſtanding of God; and that he, who muſt be entirely beholden to the boundleſs Goodneſs of God, to reſcue him from Miſery, and bring him to Happineſs, if ever he partake of his Salvation, ſhould be entirely ſatisfied with the Wiſdom of the Divine Contrivance, without which he may not, he cannot, upon any reaſonable Foundations, expect to reap the Benefit of it.

And farther, ſhould a Man, in the General, ap-

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prove the Methods of the Grace of God revealed in the Goſpel, but yet not look upon them as ſuitable to him, in Particular, and therefore not accept of Jeſus Chriſt, as he is offered to him in the Goſpel, nor acknowledge him, as he ought, for his *Saviour*; can it reaſonably be imagined that Jeſus Chriſt would be a *Saviour* to ſuch an one? Will he ſave any Man againſt his Will? Will he convey Light, and Underſtanding to the Simple, who are ſo exceeding fooliſh as to refuſe to hearken to his Inſtruction? Will he give the Maſtery over their Luſts, and Paſſions, lead in the Paths of Righteouſneſs, and conduct to Glory, thoſe obſtinate Creatures that refuſe to ſubmit to his Government, and ſay of him, we will not that this Man ſhould reign over us? Will his Atonement, and Interceſſion, be of any Avail unto ſuch as will not own him for their Surety, and depend upon what he does for them? Nay; can the Lord Jeſus Chriſt be a *Saviour* to ſuch as refuſe to accept of him, in that Capacity, and will neither hearken to his Inſtruction, ſubmit to his Authority, nor have any Dependance upon his Atonement, and Interceſſion? Verily, it is utterly impoſſible, in the Reaſon of Things, that they, who ſlight, and reject, the *Saviour*, ſhould be ſaved by him. They cannot be his Diſciples, who will not put themſelves under his Tuition; they cannot be his Servant, who will not take him for their Lord; they can receive no Benefit by his Death, who will not place their Truſt in the Merits thereof. Pſal. lxxxi. 11, 12. *Iſrael would none of me; ſo I gave them up unto their own Heart's Luſts.*

Salvation dependeth upon our Union with Chriſt, the ſecond *Adam*, as Condemnation is brought upon us by our Union with the *firſt*. 1 Cor. xv. 22. *As in Adam all die, even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive.* We cannot be naturally, and corporally, in Chriſt, as we were in *Adam*; all our Union to him

him is ſpiritual, and myſtical, hidden from our Senſes, and the View of the World, and yet it is real, and effectual, by the ſame Spirit, that was in him, poſſeſſing, and dwelling, in us; and by our being conſidered as fœderally one with him, in the Covenant of Grace. *I in them*, ſaid Chriſt; Joh. xvii. 23. *Thine they were, and thou gaveſt them me*, ſaid he; ℣. 6. and again, *abide in me, and I in you.* Joh. xv. 4. Hence we are ſaid to be *the Body of Chriſt*; 1 Cor. xii. 27. each one, as Members in particular, being incorporated into him, being, *by one Spirit, baptiſed into one Body*; ℣ 13. and by our own Conſent, eſpouſed to him, and *become Members of his Body, of his Fleſh, and of his Bones.* Eph. v. 23, 30. So that Chriſt and Believers are one, by the Father's Donation, by the Inhabitation of the ſame Spirit, and by their own Conſent: but how is it poſſible that the Spirit that is in Jeſus Chriſt ſhould be in them, or that they ſhould be conſidered fœderally as one, who withhold their own Conſent, and believe not on him? The *Apoſtle* ſays, Eph. iii. 17. *That Chriſt may dwell in your Hearts, by Faith.* Chriſt his dwelling in the Heart ſpeaks a very cloſe, and intimate, Union; and the *Apoſtle* informs us how their Union is brought about, and maintained, and that both on Chriſt's Part, and our own: on Chriſt's Part this Union is accompliſhed by *his Spirit*, poſſeſſing, and influencing of us, ℣. 16. being *ſtrengthened with Might, by his Spirit, in the inner Man*; *that Chriſt may dwell in your Hearts*: on our Part, this Union reſulteth from *our Faith*; that Chriſt may dwell in your Hearts *by Faith.* So that it is our Faith in him, that uniteth the Soul to Chriſt, and maketh it to become fœderally one with him. But then, what Portion can they have in God, or what Inheritance in the Son of God, who believe not? As well may the Body be united to the Soul without

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out the *Vinculum*, or neceſſary Bond of Union, as a Soul be united to Chriſt without Faith.

By the Union of the Soul to Chriſt, the Salvation of ſuch an one is ſure, and certain, though he may not be able to know it, and take the Comfort of it, yea, though he ſhould be exerciſed with very diſtreſſing Doubts, and Fears, concerning his future State; for the Certainty of their Salvation has it's Dependance, not upon their Knowledge of it, but, as upon the Stability of the Promiſe of God, who is infallibly true to his Word, ſo upon the Permanency, and Perpetuity, of him, who is their Head, to whom they are united, as Members of his Body; and therefore becauſe he, their Head, is ſafe, and ever will be ſo, in the full Poſſeſſion of the ineffable Delights of the heavenly World; of Conſequence all the true Members of his Body ſhall be ſafe, as he is, and ſhare with him in the unutterable Felicity he is poſſeſſed of. Thus our Lord himſelf argued, and aſſured his Diſciples, and comforted them under the ſorrowful Apprehenſions of his Departure from them, Joh. xiv. 19. *Becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo.* Whereas thoſe that are deſtitute of true Faith in Chriſt, which ever includeth a Subjection to him, as well as crediting of him, whatever their Profeſſion may be, and whatever Denomination of *Chriſtians* they are of, muſt neceſſarily die, and periſh, even *as a Branch that is caſt forth, and withereth, that Men gather, and throw into the Fire.* Joh. xv. 6.

Thus we ſee, that Faith in Jeſus Chriſt is abſolutely neceſſary to the Salvation of the Sinner, both from the plain, and poſitive, Declaration of the Goſpel, and from the Nature, and Reaſon of Things: ſo that this is one Thing the Sinner muſt do to be ſaved. But then, Can the Sinner thus believe, and be ſaved? Wherefore I proceed,

III. To conſider what the periſhing Sinner muſt do, to obtain this Faith in Chriſt, that he may be ſaved.

ſaved. Since Faith in Chriſt is abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation, and this is what I muſt do, to believe in Chriſt, that I may have everlaſting Life, how ſhall I come at this Faith? Can a poor ſinful, weak, Creature do all this of himſelf? Can he not only credit the Reports of the Goſpel, but overcome all his Prejudices, and heartily cloſe with the Offers of the Goſpel, and ſo believe in Jeſus Chriſt, as God requireth in his Word, by the mere Strength of his own Powers? No, verily; We have already ſeen that he is weak, and impotent, and not able to ſave himſelf; not only becauſe he cannot, by any Means, merit the Forgiveneſs of his paſt Sins, but alſo becauſe he cannot, of himſelf alone, come up to the Terms, which the Goſpel demandeth, that he may be forgiven: he has loſt the Vigour of his Powers, has contracted a vicious Bias upon them, and is become deſtitute of a ſufficient Strength to believe, according to the true Scripture Account of a ſaving, juſtifying Faith. It is the Sinner's own Fault if he believe not; but it does not follow from thence, that, if he believeth, it is from the Strength of his own Powers. This Faith is not the Product of Nature, nor groweth in Nature's Garden, by all the merely humane Art, and Skill, that any Man is Maſter of; but is a ſupernatural, and Divine Work, produced in the Soul by the Finger of God, the Workmanſhip of the *Holy Spirit*, who is the ſpecial Agent herein, and the principal Former of the New-Man, and all the Parts thereof, within us. Hence Faith is ſaid to be *the Gift of God*; Eph. ii. 8. and wrought *by the working of his mighty Power*. Eph. i. 19. Therefore alſo God is ſaid, Rom. xii. 3. to have dealt *to every Man the Meaſure of Faith*; which, whether it be underſtood of the Faith of working Miracles, or that Faith which is a believing in Chriſt unto Salvation, it cometh to the ſame Thing, the one being the Workmanſhip of God, as truly

as the other. Hence the Divine Spirit is called *the Spirit of Faith:* 2 Cor. iv. 13. and we find the *Apoſtle* praying for the *Theſſalonians*, in that Strain, 2 Theſſ. i. 11. *That God would fulfill all the good Pleaſure of his Goodneſs, and the Work of Faith with Power.*

But then, can the Sinner do nothing? Muſt he wait till it ſhall pleaſe God to Work all his Work in, and for him, without any Thing of his own Labour, and Pains, to obtain this ſaving Faith? Doth not God require it of him to Work, and that while it is yet Day with him? Yes, moſt certainly, there is ſomething the Sinner can do, and muſt do; and though he muſt wait upon God to do all for him, effectually, becauſe the ſovereign God worketh freely, and powerfully, yet, he muſt not wait idlely, but in the diligent Uſe of the Means, which are of Divine Appointment, that he may obtain the Bleſſing. Though a ſovereign God may in various, unexpected, and ſurpriſing Ways, excite Perſons to improve the Means, yet none may rationally look for the Bleſſing from him, without them. So that the Queſtion returns upon us, *What then muſt we do to be ſaved?* Or, ſeeing this Faith in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is ſo neceſſary unto Salvation, what ſhall I do, that I may obtain this precious Faith? What can, and what muſt, the Sinner do, in order to his being a true Believer in Chriſt?

In Anſwer to this I ſhall mention a few Things, which as they lie within the Compaſs of humane Power, ſo they ſeem to me to be ſuch a direct, and unfailing, Method to obtain the Gift of Faith from God, as never diſappointed any that ſeriouſly, and diligently improved it. But I muſt leave the particular Conſideration of them to the Afternoon Service.

SERMON

SERMON XII.

ACTS XVI. 30.

And ſaid, Sirs, What muſt I do to be ſaved?

HAVING formerly ſhewed you what is that Faith in Chriſt which is required of us, I endeavoured, in the Morning, to evidence the abſolute Neceſſity of this Faith to a Sinner's being ſaved, both from the plain Declarations of the Goſpel, and the Reaſon of Things: and then propoſed to conſider what the Sinner muſt do to obtain this precious Faith; which I now proceed to ſpecify in ſeveral Particulars. As,

1. The Sinner muſt ſeriouſly affect himſelf, with the Conſideration of his miſerable, undone State, and, in himſelf, helpleſs Condition, out of Chriſt. This the Sinner can do, his rational Mind capacitateth herefor; and this he muſt do, as ever he would have the Divine Gift conferred upon him. No Man will ſeek a Remedy until he is ſenſible of his Want of it. And there is no Man, I ſuppoſe, ſo far gone, and ſunk, under the Power of Sin, and Luſt, but what can, whilſt he has the Uſe of his Reaſon, and is capable of thinking at all, by ſeriouſly attending to

to the Dictates of natural Conscience, and comparing himself with the Word of God, be sensible that he is a very great Sinner, that he has, in many Things transgressed the Divine Law, and, thereby, has highly offended the Divine Majesty. Natural Conscience will inform him, that all Sin is most contrary to the very Nature of an infinitely Holy God, and cannot but be hateful to him; and, if he look into the sacred Oracles, he may plainly see all Sin condemned, and that *the Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven, against all Ungodliness, and Unrighteousness, of Men:* Rom. i. 18. That the Holy God has denounced his Curse upon all Sorts of Sinners, and therefore upon himself, because he has lived in such Sins, as Impiety, Profaneness, Intemperance, Lewdness, Unrighteousness, Falsehood, Malice, Envy, Pride, or some other Violation of the Divine Commands, which his own Conscience is privy to, and which are most clearly condemned in the Word of God. It is in the Sinner's Power to have some Sight of his own Sinfulness, because he is a Judge of his own Actions, and the Obliquity of them, in their Departure from the Rule; for *his Conscience* not only *beareth Witness* to what he does, but *his Thoughts in the mean while accuse him.* Rom. ii. 15. 'Tis in his Power, by serious Consideration, which he is capable of, in some suitable Degree, to affect himself with a View of the Baseness of his Sin, as it is contrary unto all Right, and Equity, of the Injuriousness of it to himself, in all his Interests, and of the Heinousness of it, as it is a Contempt of the Authority of the God that made him, and bestoweth all his Enjoyments upon him. And can he not, in like Manner, affect himself with the awful Thoughts, the fearful Apprehensions, of that tremendous Wrath, and Vengeance, of the Almighty God, which his Sin exposeth him unto? And can he not, from the common Light which he receiveth from the Scriptures,

tures, upon this View of Things, reaſon the Caſe with himſelf, and ſee what a deplorable Condition he is in, as a loſt Son, that has fooliſhly wandered from his Father's Houſe, and is now famiſhing, and dying, in the Want of all that is neceſſary to his Support, and Comfort?

Yea, farther, it is in the Sinner's Power to affect himſelf with the Thoughts how utterly unable he is to help himſelf; that he can make no Amends to God for his many paſt Tranſgreſſions, nor repair the Injury he has offered unto the Divine Majeſty by his many Rebellions againſt him. Though he may have ſome Thoughts riſing in his Mind, that he will go and humble himſelf before God, and confeſs his Iniquity to the Lord, and now put away his Sins, and live, for the future, more according to the Laws of God, yet little cloſe Thinking will ſhew him, that all of this is but a preſent Duty, and no Satisfaction for paſt Offences, and that nothing he can do will avail to divert the Divine Anger from him; and that unleſs a gracious God, from the boundleſs Goodneſs of his Nature, and for the Sake of the Merits of his Son, has Mercy on him, pardon, and ſave him, he muſt unavoidably die in his Sin, and periſh forever. There is no Sinner that readeth the Goſpel, or has it preached to him, but what may plainly ſee, that Sin has forfeited Heaven, and deſerved Hell, and that Pardon, and eternal Life, are to be obtained in, and by, Jeſus Chriſt, and by him alone.

Theſe Things the Sinner can weigh in his own Mind, and ſomewhat affect himſelf with the ſerious Conſideration of them; and thus put himſelf into the Way of the Divine *Spirit* his effectual enlightening, and convincing of him, in order to a thorow Converſion; and this he muſt do, that he may be led hereby unto Jeſus Chriſt, the only *Saviour* from Sin, and Wrath. And,

2. The

2. The Sinner muſt bring home to his reaſonable Mind, the Evidence, which is laid before him, of the Truth of the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt. This alſo lieth within the Reach of the Sinner's natural Power. The Reaſon, and Underſtanding, which God has furniſhed him withal, as a Man, fitteth him to judge of the Evidence of the Truth of Things. The Sinner can as well ſeriouſly, and impartially, ſearch into the Evidences of the Truth of the *Chriſtian Religion*, as he can into the Truth of any Matter of Fact that is reported to him; and he can weigh in his Mind, the Nature, and Strength, of thoſe Evidences, and ſee whether they carry ſo much Clearneſs, and Force, in them, as would move him, upon the like Evidence, to credit any Hiſtory of *China*, or ancient *Rome*; or would influence him to engage in any Buſineſs, of Conſequence to him, relating to thoſe Countries, which he never ſaw; and accordingly Act upon the Evidence which he ſhall receive of the Truth of the Goſpel Hiſtory, as he findeth the Matters, contained therein, are of importance to him.

Thus he can ſee the full, and abundant, Teſtimony given to the ſacred Hiſtory of the Goſpel, by the *Evangeliſts*, who all concur in their Teſtimony to the Matters of Fact, related by them, which they had the fair Opportunity to be perfectly well acquainted with, being Eye, and Ear, Witneſſes thereto, and the Truth of which Teſtimony they ſealed with their Blood; who all of them appear to be honeſt, upright, Men, and Men of Truth, who abhorred lying; and who had no worldly Intereſt in View, to bias them to what they report, but much the contrary. Thus, he can ſee the Force of the Evidence of the Truth of it, *That Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God, and Saviour of the World*, ariſing from the many plain Paſſages of the Scripture Hiſtory that aſſert it,

from the many open, clear, and inconteſtible, Miracles wrought by our Lord, and his Apoſtles, in Confirmation of it, and the exact Agreement of the many ancient Prophecies in him, and in no other Perſon whatever.

So that the Sinner can reaſon himſelf into an hiſtorical Faith, or Crediting, of the various Facts related in the Goſpel, and other Writings of the *Apoſtles*, which are left to us; and therefore into an hiſtorical Faith of Jeſus Chriſt his being the only, all-ſufficient, and willing, Saviour of Sinners, as the Goſpel reporteth him to be. His Invitation to Sinners to come to him, and live; the Pains he is at in ſending his Miniſters to woo them to accept of him; and, above all, his own dying for Sinners, are clear Convictions, how ready, and willing, he is to receive all that come to him, for Salvation; and his Divinity, as the Son of God, the Authority, and Power, he is inveſted with, as Mediator, together with his prevailing Interceſſion at the Right Hand of the Majeſty on high, which the Scripture record of him, are a full Proof that he is able to ſave, unto the uttermoſt, all that come unto God by him.

And as every Man can thus be at ſome Pains with himſelf, to reaſon himſelf into the Belief of the *Chriſtian Religion*, whence God ſaid to his ancient People, Iſa. xlvi. 8. *Remember this, and ſhew yourſelves Men; bring it again to Mind*; and our *Saviour* ſaid, Luk. xii 57. *Why even of yourſelves judge ye not what is right?* ſo ſomething of this he muſt do, that he may be found in the Way of his Duty which is God's Way; as did *Cornelius*, when he ſent for *Peter*, to tell him Words whereby he might be ſaved: and without this, if, at laſt, the Sinner be found in his Unbelief, it will be juſtly articled againſt him, that he walked not in the Light while he enjoyed it, and therefore it is a righteous Thing with God that he ſhould be caſt into outer Darkneſs.

3. The

3. The Sinner muſt ſtir up himſelf to take hold on Chriſt, and receive him for his *Saviour*. That is, the Sinner muſt try to believe. For there is no one Duty that God requireth of us, how utterly impoſſible ſoever it be to Fleſh, and Blood, and the Powers of Nature, but what it is our Part to uſe our beſt Endeavours to perform that Duty, and look to God to help us, to do what we have no Strength to do of ourſelves. The Grace, and help, of God is to be looked for in Conjunction with our own Endeavours, not in a Separation from them. Hoſ. vi. 3. *Then ſhall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord.* Thus, impotent as Man is, he muſt *take hold on the Strength of God*, that he may *be at Peace with him.* Iſa. xxvii. 5. This the Sinner muſt do; and this he can do. 'Tis a vain Thing for him to ſay, he cannot try what he can do. Jeſus Chriſt is freely offered in the Goſpel unto every Sinner, without Exception; and ſince there is no Man but what can, by a due Improvement of his rational Powers, come to ſome Conviction of his own Sinfulneſs, and what a wretched miſerable Condition Sin has brought him into, what imminent Danger he is in of periſhing forever, and that Jeſus Chriſt, the incarnate Son of God, and he only, is able to help him; how naturally does this Conviction lead the Sinner, as a rational Agent, (and who readily does ſo, in all other Caſes,) to take Pains with himſelf, to make out after Chriſt, that, if poſſible, he may lay hold on, and receive the Remedy provided for him, and freely offered to him in the Goſpel? And, at leaſt, ſo much he can do, namely, to rouſe, and ſtir up, himſelf, by a ſerious Conſideration of the Neceſſity of his being ſaved; as the Lepers, in *Iſrael*, argued, *if we enter into the City, we ſhall die there; if we ſit ſtill here, we die alſo; come let us fall into the Hoſt of the Syrians, if they ſave us alive, we ſhall live, if they kill us, we ſhould but die;*

ſo may the Sinner ſay to himſelf, if I continue in my preſent Condition, I periſh; if I attempt to go to Chriſt, I can but periſh; I will therefore ariſe, and try what I can do: He can ſeriouſly bear it in Mind, that there is nothing of equal Importance to him, nothing which ſo nearly concerneth him; that this is the one Thing needful to him; and that, if he be not ſaved, he muſt periſh forever under the Wrath of God; and that yet it is poſſible for him to obtain Mercy with God, through the Mediation of the great Redeemer; I ſay, he can awaken, and ſtir up, his Soul, by ſuch Conſiderations as theſe, to make out after an Intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt, and try what he can do to open his Heart, at the Call, and Invitation, of Chriſt, that he may receive him, who offers to come in, and ſup, with him, that, receiving him, he may obtain the Bleſſing through him, even Life forevermore. Though he be very ſenſible, that the utmoſt Strength of his own Powers is inſufficient to make a true Believer of him, yet he has ſufficient Encouragement to exert what little Power he has, and try to believe, becauſe a compaſſionate God has ſaid, Matth. xxv. 29. *Unto every one that hath ſhall be given, and he ſhall have abundance*; that is, God is graciouſly ready to aſſiſt, and ſtrengthen, the willing, though feeble, and enrich the diligent, though poor, Soul, with all the Bleſſings he needeth, while the ſlothful ſhall be ſent empty away, and can rationally expect no Help and Aſſiſtance from him. So, the Man, with a *withered Hand*, had evidently no Power, within himſelf, to ſtretch it out; and had he replyed to the Command of Chriſt, *ſtretch forth thine Hand*, Alas! Maſter; It is withered; and how then ſhall I ſtretch it out? doubtleſs, his helpleſs Condition would have remained upon him: but, when, in Obedience to the Command of Chriſt, he ſtirred up himſelf, and but attempted the Difficulty,

ficulty, which was ſurely too hard for him alone, then he received a Fulneſs of Virtue, and Power, from Chriſt, and *he ſtretched it forth, and it was reſtored whole, like as the other.* Matth. xii. 10,---13.

4. The Sinner muſt earneſtly ask it of God, to beſtow this Faith, in Jeſus Chriſt, upon him. Though the Sinner may, by the Strength of his own rational Powers, credit the Report of the Goſpel, as an Hiſtory, yet, can he not, thereby, be brought to cloſe with Chriſt, and work a true Evangelical Faith in himſelf; he cannot overcome all the Prejudices, that he labours under, againſt Chriſt, and the Way of Salvation by him, becauſe he has a natural Love to the Ways of Sin, and high Opinion of ſelf; neither can he truly ſubmit to Chriſt as his Lord, becauſe his carnal Mind is at Enmity to the Divine Law. But, however, he can ask it of God to renew his Heart, and Mind, and put a new Bias upon him, and make him willing, and enable him, to accept Chriſt as offered to him in the Goſpel. If ever he believeth to the ſaving of his Soul, it muſt be from an Act of Favour in God, accompliſhing this great Work in him, by the ſupernatural Aſſiſtances, and Operation, of his *Holy Spirit*. For this Faith is the Gift of God. Eph. ii. 8. *By Grace ye are ſaved, through Faith, and that not of yourſelves, it is the Gift of God.* It is true that, the Grace of the Goſpel, and the Way of Salvation, by Jeſus Chriſt, is not a Method found out by the Strength of the humane Powers, but is the Gift of God, who hath revealed it unto us; but then, this is not what is chiefly, if at all, the Intendment of the *Apoſtle*, in this Place, as ſome, who ſeem to take a great deal of Pains to ſet aſide the ſpecial Divine Influences, in the Converſion of a Sinner, would perſwade us. It is very evident that the *Apoſtle* ſpeaketh, here, of that Faith by which we are ſaved; *by Grace ye are ſaved*, it is an Act of Grace,

and Favour, in God, to ſave any of you, *through Faith*, as the appointed Means of an Union to Chriſt, and Salvation by him; and this *Faith* doth not flow from the Strength of Nature, *not of yourſelves*, but is the ſpecial Work of God, *it is the Gift of God*; and the Reaſon which the *Apoſtle* giveth, in the following Words, confirmeth this; *For*, ſays he, *We are his Workmanſhip, created, in Chriſt Jeſus, unto good Works*. From whence it is apparent that the *Apoſtle* intends, not an outward Act of Favour ſhown to us, as the Doctrine of Faith, contained in the Goſpel; but a ſpecial Work of Favour wrought within us: as if he had ſaid, *It is the Work of God to make true Believers of you, to unite you to Chriſt*, ſo that, (as he goes on,) ye are not, now, *without Chriſt*, and *Strangers to the Covenant of Promiſe*, but are *in Chriſt Jeſus, made nigh by the Blood of Chriſt*, &c.

Now, though the Sinner cannot give Faith unto himſelf, yet he knoweth where to go for it, even unto that God whoſe Gift it is; and he knows what he muſt do to obtain it, even to ask it of that God, who is graciouſly ready to beſtow it upon them that ſincerely pray to him therefor. God is wont to diſpenſe his Gifts, and Favours, in the Way of Prayer, as what aſcribeth to him the Glory of his Sufficiency, Dominion, and Goodneſs, and owneth our entire Dependence upon him, and ſo much the more endeareth the Mercy to us, when we receive it in Anſwer to our Prayers. And this is what the Sinner can do. The ſame natural Powers, that enable him to ask a Favour of any of his Neighbours, capacitate him to pour out a Prayer to his God; ſo that he can, if he will, beg this Mercy from God, to Work his own Work in him, even a Work of Faith with Power. And this he muſt do, by his conſtant, daily, ſincere, importunate Prayers to God, to create him in Chriſt Jeſus unto good Works; and if the Sin-

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ner will but be diligent, and ſerious, to do his Part, to obtain this Gift of God, he may depend upon it, that God will not be wanting to confer of his Grace upon him; for he has given him all imaginable Encouragement to wait upon him, in this Way, ſaying, Matth. vii. 7, 8. *Ask, and it ſhall be given you; ſeek, and ye ſhall find; knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh, receiveth* &c.

In this Way, then, let every Sinner do what he can, that he may obtain like precious Faith, to the ſaving of his Soul; and the Lord be with him. Before I proceed to conſider the ſecond Thing the Sinner muſt do to be ſaved, I ſhall conclude this firſt Head, with making ſome Improvement of what has been ſaid upon it.

USE. I. Hence we may ſee the Reaſon, why Faith in Jeſus Chriſt is ſo ſtrongly inſiſted upon in the Goſpel, and ſo frequently urged by his faithful Miniſters; viz. becauſe Faith is abſolutely neceſſary to the Salvation of Men. As the Belief of the Being of a God is the grand Principle upon which all Religion is built, ſo Faith in Chriſt is the fundamental Principle of *Chriſtianity*; and therefore the Goſpel, which aims at making Men to be *Chriſtians*, and in this Way to bring them to Heaven, and Happineſs, preacheth nothing more than this Faith in Chriſt. All our *Chriſtianity* is denominated from our Faith, becauſe this Faith is the very Point upon which all our *Chriſtianity* turns. It is the Principle in us, that gives us a Right to the *Chriſtian* Name, that is productive of Love, and good Works, the *Chriſtian* Life, and enſureth to us a Title to the pardoning Mercy of God, and the Glory of Heaven, the *Chriſtian* Hope; and without this Faith, we can neither ſerve God, ſo as to pleaſe him, nor finally find Acceptance with him; we can neither be *Chriſtians*; nor get to Heaven. Hence it is that ſo great a Streſs is laid

upon Faith, in the Goſpel, and hence we ſo frequently, and earneſtly, preſs it upon you, to believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. The Sin of Unbelief, under the Goſpel, is therefore the great damning Sin; all other Sins may be forgiven, upon a ſincere, and hearty, Believing in Chriſt, but if Men continue in their Unbelief, how ſhall they eſcape the Damnation of Hell? Heb. x. 26. *There remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sins*; if the only atoning Sacrifice, which Chriſt has offered, unto God, once for all, be rejected. Whatever be the Fulneſs, and Sufficiency, of Chriſt's Merits, or his Willingneſs to ſave all that come to him, yet, without Faith in him, no Man can receive any ſaving Benefit from his Appearing, and Death, he can neither be enriched with the Virtues, and Graces, of the *Chriſtian* Life, which flow from him, nor enjoy the happy Lot, and Portion, of *Chriſtians*, in the upper World; he can neither be a good Man, nor be ſaved. And, if ſo, then of Neceſſity ſuch muſt fall under the Diſpleaſure of the Almighty, and there will be no poſſible Way for them to eſcape his righteous Judgments; there remaineth a *certain fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation, which ſhall devour the Adverſaries.* ℣. 27. It is not Men's being in ſuch or ſuch an exalted Station, and making a Figure, in this World; 'tis not their great natural Parts, or rich acquired Endowments of humane Learning, and Knowledge; 'tis not their accumulated Wealth, and Abundance, that will carry them ſafe to Heaven; nor is it their moral Honeſty, and civil, and courteous Behaviour, among Men, that will avail to their Acceptance with God; no; they may poſſeſs the World in the greateſt Fulneſs, and be very inoffenſive in their Lives, and yet be baniſhed from Heaven, after all. But the great Thing that will open the Gates of Heaven, to the departing Soul, is, a true Goſpel Faith in Jeſus Chriſt.

Chriſt. Hence our Lord ſaid to his Diſciples, Joh. xiv. 1, 3. *Ye believe in God, believe alſo in me;---I go, and prepare a Place for you, and I will come again, and receive you to myſelf, that where I am, there ye may be alſo.* And ſince this Faith in Chriſt is ſo abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation, is it to be wondered at that the Goſpel ſo largely inſiſteth upon it? Or can the Miniſters of the Goſpel bear to ſee their People go down to the Place of everlaſting Darkneſs, and Miſery, and not urge, and preſs, it upon them, to believe in Chriſt, that they may be ſaved?

2. From hence we may ſee the Reaſon, why ſo many, in the *Chriſtian* World, periſh in their Sins; even becauſe they do not truly believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. It was the Complaint of the *Prophet*, of old, Iſa. liii. 1. *Who hath believed our Report?* and the *Apoſtle* maketh the like Complaint, Heb. iv. 2. *The Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with Faith, in them that heard it.* And thus it is alſo in our Days; many who hear the Word of God preached, in great Plainneſs, and with great Fervency, yet do not mix it with Faith, nor believe our Report, a vain Philoſophy, with an Affectation of being wiſe, above what is written, have conſpired, with the Luſts of Men, almoſt to baniſh Faith even from the profeſſing World. Our *Saviour* hath told us, Matth. xx. 16. *Many be called, but few choſen.* Alaſs! It is a moſt ſad, and melancholy Thought, that ſo very many periſh from under the Goſpel, the beſt Means of their being ſaved: though they are lifted up to Heaven, in their near Approaches to the Confines of that happy Country, yet they, at laſt, periſh in their Unbelief, and are brought down to Hell. And how can it be otherwiſe, when we ſee the Lives of Men are ſo generally ſpent in the Service of Sin; in Impiety, and profane Curſing, and Swearing, and Neglect of the Worſhip,

ſhip, and Contempt of the Ordinances of God, in Unrighteouſneſs, Fraud, Oppreſſion, Falſhood, Uncleanneſs, Intemperance, Malice, Slander, ungovernable Anger, and the like? And that, ſo far as we are capable of diſcerning, as they live, ſo they die, without any viſible Change in them, or any great Concern what will become of them? Yet theſe are numbered amongſt *Chriſtians*, they openly profeſs themſelves to be Believers, and becauſe they ſay, they believe in Chriſt, and it may be do ſo, with ſomething of an hiſtorical Faith, therefore they pacify their Conſciences, and doubt not but that all ſhall be well with them, hereafter; till, anon, they die, and drop down into Hell; and then they find, to their Coſt, that their Faith, ſuch as it was, cannot poſſibly ſave them, becauſe, after all their Pretentions, they really had not that true Faith in Jeſus Chriſt, which the Goſpel requireth. There are two great Defects in moſt Men's Faith; The one is, that it is defective as an hiſtorical Faith; there is ſomewhat of the Nature of that Kind of Faith in them, but it is not built upon the only ſure Foundation; they believe the Scripture Hiſtory, and ſo believe in Chriſt, but, upon no other Foundation than this, that it is Part of the Religion of their Country, and not becauſe they have, upon due Search, received full Conviction, in their own Minds, ariſing from the Teſtimony, and Seal of God himſelf, of the Truth of what they believe; and thus the Faith which they have, is rather an Opinion, than the Evidence of Things not ſeen, and ſo their Faith, as Dr. *Bates* expreſſes it, * *may be abſolutely true, but relatively falſe*: and no wonder, if the Houſe be thus built upon the Sand, that the Storm quickly overthroweth it.

Another Defect in their Faith, ſuppoſing it to be true as hiſtorical, is, that it is not that Faith

* *Fol.* p. 590.

which

which the Gospel requireth unto Salvation; it may be a Part, (though the lowest,) but not the Whole of true saving Evangelical Faith, which forever includeth in it, not only a Belief that there was such a Person as Christ Jesus, who said, and did, what is affirmed of him, in the Scriptures, but a sincere, and hearty, Choice of him, in all his Offices, and with all his Benefits, for our *Saviour*; that is, that we truly subject ourselves to his Teaching, and Government, as well as hope for Redemption through him; that we sincerely consent, and be willing that he should save us from Sin, as well as from Wrath, that he should make us holy, as well as make us happy. Without this all a Man's historical Faith, should it be strong enough to remove Mountains, will signify just nothing at all to save him.

So that, after all the open Profession, and Pretentions, and Hopes, of the Generality of them that are called *Christians*, it may be said of them, *They have not Faith*, they are not true Believers, in the Gospel Sense; and because they believe not, therefore it is that they live in Rebellion against their Maker, and, at last, perish in their Sins. Hence is that Exprobration of the Apostle *James*, Jam. ii. 14. *What doth it profit, my Brethren, though a Man say he hath Faith, and have not Works? Can Faith save him?* Which is to be understood of a naked crediting the Report of the Gospel, or an historical Faith in Christ, which can save no Man. Possibly, many Pieces of Divinity, whose Writers, in treating of a saving, justifying, Faith, have chose to express themselves in such Terms, That *Faith is a firm Perswasion of the Mind* of the Truth of the Gospel, (though I readily understand them, as meaning by it, not a naked Credit of the Gospel History, but such a Faith as has it's Influence upon the Heart, and Life, and therefore called a *firm* Perswasion; including in it

it a Reception of Chriſt, upon Goſpel Terms, and that purifyeth the Heart, and worketh by Love; yet, I ſay, poſſibly ſuch Writings,) may have contributed, not a little, to the deceiving of many, who are ready to catch at every Shadow, to countenance a falſe Faith.

3. See from hence the exceeding Perverſneſs of the humane Nature that it is ſo difficultly brought to believe ſpiritual, and Divine Things. Faith in Chriſt is abſolutely neceſſary unto Salvation, and there is the ſureſt Foundation laid for this Faith that can be deſired, in the Certainty of the Truth of the Goſpel, and the Evidences that Chriſt was ſent from God, and that Salvation is to be obtained by him, and by him only; and why is it then, that Men do not believe the Goſpel, and believe in Chriſt? Our Lord himſelf, has told us, Luk. xxii. 67. *Ye will not believe.* Men more eaſily believe other Things, of very conſiderable Importance to them, and Act upon the Faith thereof, though they are often confirmed but by very weak Arguments; but how hard and difficult is it to perſwade them to believe in Chriſt, upon the ſtrongeſt Arguments, and cleareſt Evidence? The Pretenſion, indeed, often is, that they do not ſee with their bodily Eyes, or they cannot underſtand all the Myſteries contained in in the Doctrines that are revealed to them. But ſince there is the fulleſt Evidence of the Truth of what is reported to them, and ſuch Evidence as would clearly determine them in other Caſes, this ſheweth, that it proceedeth from the deſperate Perverſneſs of their Hearts, that they believe not. Joh. viii. 46. *Though I tell you the Truth,* (ſaid Chriſt,) *Ye believe me not:* And why? becauſe, *Ye are of your Father the Devil, and the Luſts of your Father ye will do.* So *the God of this World hath blinded the Minds of them which believe not* 2 Cor. iv. 4.

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Who can underſtand all the Myſteries in Nature? and yet we are even compelled to believe the Things which we underſtand not. And why then will not Men be prevailed with to believe the Truths of the Goſpel, ſufficiently confirmed, though they contain Myſteries in them? Said the *Apoſtle*, Gal. iii. 1. *O fooliſh Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that you ſhould not obey the Truth; before whoſe Eyes Jeſus Chriſt hath been evidently ſet forth, crucified among you?* It is a ſtrange Faſcination, this, upon the Minds of Men, that they ſhould require ſtronger Evidence, for their Belief of the Truth of the Goſpel, than the Nature of the Things will admit of, or than they require in other Caſes. The Doctrines of Faith are not to be proved by Senſe, and Experience, nor by Reaſon, and Demonſtration, but by Teſtimony; and when this Teſtimony is clear, and full, we have then all the Evidence that the Nature of the Thing does require, or will bear. Upon this Foundation Men Act in all the Affairs of the preſent Life, wherein Teſtimony is concerned; and is it not moſt unreaſonable, that they will not Act upon the ſame Evidence, or rather greater, in Matters wherein their eternal Intereſts are concerned? This argueth the Faſcination of their Minds, that their Hearts are deſperately wicked, and therefore 'tis that they will not believe; not for want of ſufficient Proof of the Truth, and Reality, of the Things propoſed to them, but becauſe they will not.

4. This ſhould put us upon the ſerious Examination of ourſelves, whether we are true Believers in Chriſt, yea, or no. There are many, doubtleſs, who delude themſelves, with a falſe Faith, and falſe Hopes of Heaven, and Happineſs, who will, at laſt, be found to be deſtitute of the Faith, and miſs of eternal Salvation. What Reaſon, then, have we to be very much concerned, leſt we alſo

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be miſtaken, in a Matter of ſo great Importance to us, and where there will be no Poſſibility for us to correct the Error afterwards? Heb. iv. 1. *Let us therefore fear, leſt a Promiſe being left us of entring into his Reſt, any of you ſhould ſeem to come ſhort thereof.* If Faith, in Jeſus Chriſt, be abſolutely neceſſary unto Salvation, then, by this, we may know whether we are in a State of Salvation, whether we have good Grounds to hope that all our Sins ſhall be pardoned, that God is reconciled to us, and will finally accept us in the Beloved; and ſurely, it is richly worth our while to have ſome good Evidences of this, that we may walk in the Light of the Lord, and joy in the God of our Salvation.

I will only, now, briefly ſay, (agreeable to the Account I have given of a true Goſpel Faith in Chriſt,) are we careful, to our crediting the Reports of the Goſpel, to add, our cordial Approbation of the Methods of Divine Grace, in the Way, and Manner, of the Sinner's Salvation, by the Incarnation, and Death, of the Son of God? Are we ſatisfied in the Wiſdom, and Juſtice, and Goodneſs, of this Way of Grace, and Favour, admire the Excellency of the Divine Contrivance, love the Holineſs, and Purity, of the whole Scheme, and adore the Perfections of God, thus manifeſted for the Relief of poor periſhing Sinners? Is Jeſus Chriſt, the chief Subject of the Divine Revelation, and the great Author of our Salvation, exceeding precious to us, above all the Enjoyments of this World? Have we ſincerely, heartily, made Choice of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt for our Saviour, in all his mediatorial Offices, and are we willing, not only to rely upon the Merits of his Sacrifice, but, to put ourſelves under his Inſtruction, as a Teacher ſent from God? Have we taken him for our Head, and reſigned ourſelves up to his Government, opened our Ears to hear his Voice, and enclined

clined our Hearts to comply with all that we ſhall know to be his Command? Have we thus cloſed with him, as our *Saviour*, that he may, of God, be made unto us, Wiſdom, and Righteouſneſs, Sanctification, and Redemption? Then may we take the Comfort of it, and know that we are in him, and he in us; and that this our Faith, tho' but weak, and as a Grain of Muſtard Seed, ſhall grow up, and bear Fruit, unto eternal Life: for thus we are aſſured, 1 Joh. v. 12, 13. *He that hath the Son hath Life*; ---- *Theſe Things have I written unto you, that believe, on the Name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal Life.*

5. Laſtly; Let us all, then, be perſwaded to live by the Faith of the Son of God; to live in the Exerciſe of a true Evangelical Faith in Chriſt, now, that we may live with him forever, hereafter, in Glory. Our Salvation turns upon this; and the final Trial, of thoſe that live under the Goſpel, will be, whether they have complyed with the great Demand of the Goſpel, and have believed on the Name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; whether they have received him into their Underſtanding, Affection, and Will, and entirely ſubmitted themſelves to him, as their Maſter, and Lord. For, *not every one that ſaith to me, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the Will of my Father, which is in Heaven*; ſaid Chriſt, Matth. vii. 21.

As to the Heathen World, who have not had the Goſpel of Chriſt preached to them, they will be judged by the Law of Nature, and be condemned, not for their not believing on Chriſt, of whom they never heard, but, for their not glorifying of God, when they had ſuch evident Demonſtrations of his Being, and glorious Perfections, and their Relation to him, and Dependance upon him, from all the Works of God around them. But the Caſe is otherwiſe with us, and the

final

final Proceſs, with us, will be, according as we are true Believers in Chriſt, or no.

Let us, then, now, be perſwaded to embrace the Goſpel Offer, and open the everlaſting Doors of our Souls, and receive Chriſt, the Lord, into our Hearts, into our whole Hearts, that we may be found of him, in Peace, at the great Day.

And therefore, conſider, how highly reaſonable it is that you ſhould credit the Reports of the Goſpel, concerning Chriſt, and the Way of Salvation by him, which is ſo every way confirmed to be the Truths of God, teſtified to by the *Amen, the faithful, and true Witneſs*, and ratified with his Blood.

Think alſo, how reaſonable it is that you ſhould approve of the whole Method of Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt, as moſt worthy of God, and advantageous to yourſelves. In what Way could the Divine Underſtanding, and Wiſdom, more open, and diſplay themſelves, than in this admirable Contrivance, wherein the Honour of the Divine Sovereignty, and Dominion, is fully aſſerted, the Holineſs of his Law vindicated, his Juſtice ſatisfied, and his Mercy forever magnified, and made glorious? Or, in what Method could God himſelf have more clearly manifeſted the Superabundance of his Love, and Good-will, and more ſtrongly allure, and attach us to himſelf?

And conſider, Is not Jeſus Chriſt infinitely worthy of thy higheſt Affection, and thy moſt humble Submiſſion? *Worthy is the Lamb, that was ſlain!* Rev. v. 12. Is not he worthy that thou ſhouldeſt come to him for Inſtruction, who teacheth ſo as never Man taught? Is he not worthy that thou ſhouldeſt own, follow, and obey him, who is Lord of all, the King of Glory? Is he not worthy that thou ſhouldeſt put thy Truſt in him, look to him, and rely upon him, for Grace, and Glory, and every good Thing, who has died to purchaſe all, and

riſen

riſen again, and everliveth, to ſee to the Beſtowment of all upon thee?

O be perſwaded, then, to yield the hearty Conſent of your Souls, that this Jeſus ſhould be your *Saviour*, and reſign up your whole ſelves unto him, to be his only, entirely, and forever. And therefore begrutch no Pains to obtain this precious Faith, in a due Improvement of your rational Powers, in ſearching into the Truth of the ſacred Writings; by a ſerious Reflection upon your unhappy Condition, while ſeperated from him, in whom all Fullneſs dwelleth; and by a diligent Attendance upon the Word Preached, as the appointed Means to beget Faith in you; that by your fervent Supplications to God, to Work this Faith in you; that there may not be found in any of you an evil Heart of Unbelief, departing from the living God, but, that you may be of them who believe, to the ſaving of your Souls.

And if it hath pleaſed God, who is never wanting to crown with Succeſs, the ſincere, and honeſt Endeavours of thoſe, who carefully ſeek the Bleſſing from him, by the ſupernatural Operations of his *Holy Spirit* in you, to convey the Divine Light into your Minds, in the Knowledge of Chriſt, and to warm your Hearts with the Love of him, and bend your Wills to ſubmit to his Diſcipline, ſo that any of you can lay your Hands upon your Hearts, and ſay, I have ſincerely choſen the Lord Jeſus Chriſt for my *Saviour*, with a fixed Reſolution of Soul, to be a diligent, and conſtant, Follower of him; Thus *I believe, Lord help my Unbelief*; then mayeſt thou, O happy Soul! ſay, 2 Tim. i. 12. *I know whom I have believed, and am perſwaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him*: And unto ſuch an one, I may, in the Name of Chriſt, offer the Word of Comfort, and ſay, as he did to *Mary*, Luk. vii. 50. *Thy Faith hath ſaved thee; go in Peace.*

Repentance abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation.

SERMON XIII.

ACTS XVI. 30.

And ſaid, Sirs, What muſt I do to be ſaved?

THE Point I am upon, from theſe Words, is,

Doc. It is of the higheſt Concernment to periſhing Sinners, to be very ſolicitous, what they muſt do to be ſaved; or, to know, and practiſe, all that is neceſſary, in order to their Salvation.

I am upon the Third general Head under this Doctrine, namely,

III. That periſhing Sinners muſt know, and practiſe, all that is neceſſary, in order to their Salvation; or, there is ſomething to be done, by them, that they may be ſaved. Though they cannot ſave themſelves, yet there is ſomething neceſſary to be done, by them, and they muſt know what this is, and then reduce their Knowledge into Practice. And in Anſwer to the grand Enquiry, *What muſt*

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the Sinner do to be ſaved? I have ſaid theſe two Things are abſolutely neceſſary.

I. It is abſolutely neceſſary, that periſhing Sinners believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in order to their being ſaved.

II. It is abſolutely neceſſary, that the periſhing Sinner repent of all his Sins, in order to his being ſaved. I have diſcourſed upon the Doctrine of Faith in Jeſus Chriſt, and ſhewed you, what I apprehend to be the Goſpel Senſe of that Faith in Chriſt, which is neceſſary unto Salvation, namely, a firm Perſwaſion of the Mind, of the Truth of all that is related in the Word of God, concerning Jeſus Chriſt, and the Way of Salvation by him; and an entire Satisfaction in the Goſpel Method of Salvation by Chriſt; and an hearty Acceptance of, and Cloſure with, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as our only *Saviour*, according to the Offer of the Goſpel. This Faith in Chriſt, I ſhewed you, is abſolutely neceſſary, both, from the plain, and poſſitive, Demand of God, in his Word, and from the Nature, and Reaſon of Things. This, therefore is one Thing, in Practice, which the Sinner has to do, thus to live a Life of Faith in the Son of God, which that he may attain unto, he muſt ſeriouſly affect himſelf with the Conſideration of his miſerable Condition out of Chriſt, bring home to his reaſonable Mind the Evidences of the Truth of the Goſpel of Chriſt, ſtir up himſelf to take hold on Chriſt, and earneſtly ask it of God to beſtow this Faith upon him. I proceed now to the Second Thing, under the Head of Practice; namely,

II. It is abſolutely neceſſary that the periſhing Sinner repent of all his Sins, in order to his being ſaved. Faith and Repentance are inſeperably connected, ſo that the one cannot poſſibly ſubſiſt without the other; for whatever Precedency, in Order of Nature, as the Principle from whence it ſpring-

eth, Faith may have to Repentance, yet can Faith no more be without Repentance, than the Sun can exiſt without it's Rays, nor can Repentance be without Faith, any more than the Rays can be without the Sun; and therefore both are abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation. And becauſe this, of Repentance, is a Duty incumbent upon every one of us, and ſo great a Matter as our eternal Salvation is dependent upon it, I ſhall therefore endeavour, by Divine Aſſiſtance, to make it plain to you in this Method;

I. By ſhewing you, what that Repentance is, which is required of us, as neceſſary to Salvation.

II. I ſhall evidence, that ſuch a Repentance is abſolutely neceſſary unto Salvation, and no Man can reaſonably hope to be ſaved without it.

III. I ſhall conſider, what the periſhing Sinner muſt do, to obtain this Repentance unto Salvation.

I. I am to ſhew you, what that Repentance is, which is required of us, as neceſſary unto Salvation. Here it may be obſerved, that if Repentance be conſidered as it reſpecteth the firſt turning of the Man, from that which is Evil, to that which is Good, it meaneth the ſame Thing with Converſion, and Regeneration; and if we conſider it as it reſpecteth particular Sins, or particular Duties, or the Progreſs the Man makes, in mortifying of Sin, and advancing in Holineſs, ſo it is the ſame with Sanctification; ſo that it is comprehenſive both of the Beginning, and the Progreſs, of a Life of Holineſs. And that we may have a true, and juſt, Conception of this Duty of Repentance, and not deceive ourſelves with any falſe, and miſtaken, Notions, about a Matter of ſuch great Importance to us, it will be fitting for us to obſerve, the Account which the ſacred Scriptures giveth us

of

of it; that we may, from thence, know what is that true, and genuine, Repentance, which the Lord our God requireth of us, and which will be acceptable, and pleaſing to him. Here, I do not deſign, now, to multiply Texts, of which the Scriptures are full, ſhewing us the true Nature of Repentance, but, I ſhall only turn you to a few, out of many, in both Teſtaments, which will ſerve to give us a full, and clear, Account of this neceſſary Work.

Thus, we have the old Teſtament Deſcription of Repentance, in thoſe Words of the *Prophet*, Iſa. lv. 7. *Let the wicked forſake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord.* And again, the ſame *Prophet* thus deſcribeth it, Ch. i. ℣. 16. 17. *Waſh ye, make you clean; put away the Evil of your Doings, from before mine Eyes; ceaſe to do Evil, learn to do Well.*

The New Teſtament Account of Repentance exactly agreeth with this of the old, as is evident, from the whole of that excellent Sermon, which our Lord delivered at the Foot of the Mount; Matth. Ch. v. vi. vii. which is no other than a clear Directory, and ſtrong Perſwaſion, unto Repentance; and agreeably alſo the *Apoſtles* of our Lord call upon us, Rom. xii. 9. *To abhor that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good*; and to *cleanſe ourſelves from all Filthineſs, of Fleſh, and Spirit, and to perfect Holineſs, in the Fear of God*: 1 Cor. vii. 1. and *Paul* tells *Agrippa*, this was what he preached, to *Jews*, and *Gentiles*, Acts xxvi. 20. *That Men ſhould repent, and turn to God, and do Works meet for Repentance*; and we are aſſured that the great Deſign of the Grace of God, manifeſted to us in the Goſpel, is, Tit. ii. 12. to *teach us to deny Ungodlineſs, and worldly Luſts, and that we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, in this preſent World.* So that, from theſe, and many other Places of Scripture, that might have been named, which

give us a plain, and full, Account, what that Repentance towards God is, which is required of us, in order to our being ſaved, we may evidently ſee that it comprehendeth theſe two Things in it, as eſſential to it; viz.

[I.] The forſaking of all Sin.

[II.] The leading of a vertuous and holy Life.

[I.] The periſhing Sinner muſt ſincerely, and heartily, forſake all his ſinful, and Vicious Courſes. For, he is not, nor can he juſtly be eſteemed, a true Penitent, who does not forſake the Sins, which his Nature, Conſtitution, or Practice, may addict him unto; becauſe the very Nature of Repentance includeth in it, the Abandoning of all Sin, of every Sort, Kind, and Degree.

But then, it muſt be remembered, we may not ſuppoſe, that he is not a true Penitent, who has not ſo abſolutely, and entirely, forſaken all Sin, as never more to be found guilty of any, the leaſt, Tranſgreſſion of the Divine Law, in Thought, in Word; or in Deed. Such a compleat Victory over Sin is, indeed, to be the Aim of every Penitent; he ſhould be ſtill preſſing forward, to the Mark for the Prize of his high Calling, and endeavour to be as ſinleſs as the holy Angels, and perfect Spirits, in Glory, are; but, after all his Endeavours, his Care, and Watchfulneſs, there will be ſtill a Remainder of Corruption in him, while he is in the Body, in a militant State, and he will often have Cauſe to complain, as the holy *Apoſtle* does, Rom. vii. 23. of *a Law in his Members, warring againſt the Law of his Mind, and,* ſometimes, *bringing of him into Captivity to the Law of Sin.* A ſinleſs Perfection, however pretended to, by an haughty, and ignorant, Generation, is not to be attained unto, by the holieſt of Men, while they are in the preſent evil World; but it is reſerved, as the juſt Reward, and conſummate Happineſs, of the good Man, in Heaven. The Evangelical

gellical Repentance, therefore, which is, now, required of us, is more accommodated to our present State of Probation; and there is nothing more included in it, than, through the Grace of Chriſt aſſiſting of us, we are capable of, even while we are, here, attended with our inward Weakneſſes, and ſurrounded with many, and ſtrong, Temptations. And that I may give you a true Account of this Part of Repentance, and ſet before you what the Word of God requireth of us, I ſhall mention ſome Things particularly, as included in it. As now,

1. The periſhing Sinner muſt be truly, and heartily, ſorry, and aſhamed, for all his paſt Sinfulneſs. This is an eſſential Ingredient in true Repentance, that a Man be ſuitably affected with Sorrow, and Shame, at his having done amiſs; for no Man can be ſuppoſed to repent of what he has done, if he is not thorowly ſenſible that he has done, what he ought not to have done; and 'tis impoſſible for an intelligent Agent to receive a thorow Conviction, that he has done amiſs, without being inwardly ſorry, and aſhamed, at his very Heart, for what he has done; becauſe Falſhood, and Error, or a doing of that which is contrary to Truth, and Right, is as burdenſome to right Reaſon, when the Man perceiveth it, as Pain is to Senſe. As a Man cannot be ſenſible of a Wound, given to the Body, without feeling the Pain of it, and being uneaſy at it, how manfully ſoever he bears it; ſo neither can he perceive the Wound, which Sin giveth unto his Soul, without his Mind's being ſuitably affected with Pain: and *the Pain of the Mind is to be ſorry, and aſhamed.*

From hence, indeed, all true Repentance takes it's Riſe; for he that is ſincerely ſorry, and aſhamed, that he has done a wrong Thing, feels ſuch a Pain, and Uneaſineſs, in his Mind, as is likely to make him very careful, for the future, to

do ſo no more; and the more heartily he is affected with an Uneaſineſs, of Mind, from a Senſe of what he has done, ſo much the more careful will he be, to avoid the Temptations to expoſe himſelf to the like Uneaſineſs, for the Time to come. Hence you find the *Pſalmiſt* expreſſing his Repentance by that, of being *ſorry for his Sin*: Pſal. xxxviii. 18. and the *Apoſtle* thus writes to the penitent *Corinthians*, 2 Cor. vii. 9, 10. *I rejoice, not that ye were made ſorry, but that ye ſorrowed unto Repentance; for ye were made ſorry after a godly Sort; for godly Sorrow worketh Repentance unto Salvation.* In like Manner the Prophet *Ezekiel* directed the Sinners of old, Ezek. xx. 43. *Ye ſhall remember your Ways, and all your Doings, wherein ye have been defiled, and ye ſhall loath yourſelves in your own Sight, for all your Evils that ye have committed.*

The penitent Sinner, therefore, muſt call to Mind, what a vile, wretched, ſinful, Creature he has been, what a deſperately wicked Heart he has within him, bent to Backſliding, prone to Evil, and averſe to all that is Good; he muſt call over his paſt Life, that he may be able to ſee, in how many Inſtances, he has done what he ought not to have done, and left undone the Things which he ought to have done. And the Thoughts, that he has, in ſo many Inſtances, and thoſe attended with many very great Aggravations, injured, and affronted, the infinitely great, and holy, and good God, ſhould make him with Sorrow, and Shame, to go before the Lord, and confeſs his Tranſgreſſions, and bewail himſelf, in the Strain of the returning Prodigal, Luk. xv. 21. *Father, I have ſinned againſt Heaven, and in thy ſight, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son.* The Thought, that he has injured himſelf, hurt, and wounded his own Soul, and expoſed himſelf to the Reſentments of a Sin hateing God, ſhould alſo put him upon crying out againſt himſelf, as *David* did, 2 Sam. xxiv. 10.

I have ſinned greatly in that I have done, for I have done very fooliſhly. The Senſe of the Evil of Sin, and of his own Sinfulneſs, ſhould excite in him an inward Self-loathing, and fill him with Grief, and Brokenneſs, and Contrition, of Soul, for his Folly, and Baſeneſs, his Ingratitude, and Raſhneſs, in having been guilty of ſo great an Evil as Sin is; an Evil ſo contrary to our Relation to, and Dependence upon, our Maker; ſo Affronting to all the Compaſſion, and Love, the Purity of the Life, and the great Ends of the Death, of the moſt endearing *Saviour*, ſo unbecoming our rational Natures, and ſo deſtructive of all our valuable Intereſts, that we may well wonder at ourſelves, how it is poſſible, any Temptation ſhould be ſtrong enough, to prevail upon us, to allow ourſelves to have any Thing to do with it.

The Degrees of this inward Sorrow, and Shame, are not equal, indeed, in all true Penitents; but, partly from different Tempers, and Conſtitutions, and partly from the different Degrees of Conviction, which Perſons receive, of the vile Nature, and dreadful Conſequents of Sin, the Degrees of this Sorrow will be exceeding various, in different Perſons, yea, in the ſame Perſon, at different Times; ſo that Rivers of Water ſhall flow down his Eyes, at one Time, from whom, at an other Time, and upon like Occaſion, not a Tear can be extorted: yet, notwithſtanding this Diverſity, where there is a ſincere Repentance, there will, be more or leſs, ſomething of the Truth, and Reality, of this godly Sorrow for Sin. When *Peter* preached to a great Concourſe of People, aſſembled at *Jeruſalem*, and plainly laid before them the Evidences of their Guilt, in crucifying of the Lord of Glory, who was ſo far from deſerving the ill Treatment they gave him, that he truly merited the higheſt Veneration, and Applauſe from them, both as a common Benefactor, and as bringing with him ſufficient

ſufficient Credentials of his Miſſion from God, and his being the ancient promiſed *Meſſiah*, and they ſaw the Truth, and felt the Force, of the *Apoſtle*'s Reaſoning, it is remarked of them, Acts ii. 37. *When they heard this, they were pricked in their Heart, and ſaid, unto Peter, and to the reſt of the Apoſtles, Men, and Brethren, what ſhall we do?* The Senſe of their Sin, and Guilt, deeply pierced them; it went to their very Hearts; it pricked, and wounded, their Souls within them; they felt the Smart of it; and were filled with Shame, and Sorrow, of Soul, at the Thoughts of what they had done: and when Conviction was thus excited in them, and they felt the Reproaches of their own Minds, for their paſt Folly, now they were enclined to receive Advice about their future Conduct, and manifeſted their Repentance, by a Readineſs to apply themſelves to what they ſhould know to be their Duty; *Men, and Brethren*, ſay they, *what ſhall we do?* If ever the Sinner be brought to Repentance, he will feel ſomething of the Smart of Sin, in the Wounds which it has given to his Soul within him, and the Laſhes of his Conſcience will fill him with Grief, and Remorſe, and make him to ſay with *Hezekiah*, Iſa. xxxviii. 15. *I ſhall go ſoftly, all my Days, in the Bitterneſs of my Soul.*

2. The periſhing Sinner muſt not only be ſorry, and aſhamed, that he has ſinned heretofore, but he muſt now ſincerely turn from all his Tranſgreſſions. Repentance has an Object from which it turneth, and that is Sin. That Sorrow for Sin, which is not followed with a Ceaſing to do Evil, which produceth no Indignation at Sin, nor Care to avoid it, for the future, will be to no good Purpoſe; and as it deſerveth not the Name of Sorrow for Sin, ſo neither will it be any Part, nor Evidence, of a true Repentance. The Nature of, and chief Thing in, Repentance is, a turning from Sin, and leaving of thoſe wicked Practices, which,

heretofore,

heretofore, a Man has accuſtomed himſelf to. Therefore the *Prophet* ſays, Ezek. iii. 19. *If thou warn the Wicked, and he turn not from his Wickedneſs, nor from his wicked Ways, he ſhall die in his Iniquity.* And hence the wiſe Man adviſeth, Prov. iv. 14, 15. *Enter not into the Path of the Wicked, and go not in the Way of evil Men; avoid it, and paſs away.* Yea; there muſt be a turning from every evil Way, a forſaking of Sin, as Sin, and therefore one as well as another. For, how does he repent of his Errors, who holdeth any of them faſt, and refuſeth to let them go? Nay; how can Sin be embittered unto him, who ſtill taketh Delight, and Pleaſure, in any Way of Wickedneſs? Whoſoever, therefore, ſtoppeth ſhort of putting away the Evil of his Ways, and Doings, and is not careful to avoid every ſinful Thing, is no ſincere Penitent. The Command of the great God is, Ezek. xviii. 30. *Repent, and turn yourſelves, from all your Tranſgreſſions; ſo Iniquity ſhall not be your Ruin.* This turning from Sin muſt, therefore, be entire, from all Sin, without allowing of ourſelves in the known, wilful, Commiſſion of any one Sin whatever. If we turn not from all our Sins, but hug any Luſt in our Boſom, we may not reaſonably hope for Salvation; becauſe the leaſt Sin, lived in, and indulged, bringeth Death upon the Soul. For, though one Sin, in it's own Nature, may be more heinous, and, by Reaſon of the Circumſtances that attend it, may be more aggravated, than an other, yet, all Sin, of what Kind ſoever, is directly contrary unto the Divine Law, and therefore is the higheſt Affront to the Authority, and Dominion, the Wiſdom, and Purity, of the ſovereign Law-giver; and, at the ſame Time, contaminates, and defiles, the Soul, and brings it under the Power of Guilt; and thus renders the Soul moſt unlike to the Holy God, at Enmity againſt him, and obnoxious to his righteous Vengeance,

geance, and therefore utterly unfit to enjoy him: and conſequently, will forever be a Bar in the Way of the Salvation of the Soul, if it be not truly, and ſeaſonably, repented of; that is, if the Soul be not purged from it.

So that the Sinner muſt turn from every Sin, and that, not only from the groſſer Tranſgreſſions, but, from thoſe that are wont to be accounted comparatively ſmall; and, not only from thoſe which he may have leaſt Affection, and Inclination to, but, thoſe that are moſt dear to him, and what his Temper, and Conſtitution, his Company, or his Buſineſs, may render him moſt eaſily addicted to. For thus our *Saviour* addreſſeth us, Matth. v. 29, 30. *If thy right Eye offend thee, pluck it out, and caſt it from thee; ---- if thy right Hand offend thee, cut it off, and caſt it from thee; it is profitable for thee, that one of thy Members ſhould periſh, and not that thy whole Body ſhould be caſt into Hell.* He that would ſo run, as to obtain the Prize, muſt lay aſide every Weight, and the Sin that does moſt eaſily beſet him. And this his turning from all Sin muſt be, both in Heart, and in Life.

1. The penitent Sinner muſt, in his Heart, turn from all Sin. For if the Heart of the Sinner be not broken off from it's Love to, and Delight in, the Ways of Sin, it is certain that it never was truly broken, and humbled, within him, for his Sin. It is the Heart that is the Fountain of all Sin, the Sink of all Abominations, *out of which*, as Chriſt hath told us, Matth. xv. 19. *proceedeth evil Thoughts, Murders, Adulteries, Fornications, Thefts, falſe Witneſs, Blaſphemies.* There can, therefore, be no true Repentance, until the Heart is cleanſed from all Wickedneſs. The Fountain muſt be firſt made pure, before the Streams will be clear: the Tree muſt firſt be made good, and then it's Fruit will be good. And, indeed, herein lies the very

Eſſence

Eſſence of Repentance, in getting a new Heart, and right Spirit; and therefore, in the ſacred Scriptures, Repentance is ſo deſcribed, Jer. iv. 14. *Waſh thine Heart from Wickedneſs, that thou mayeſt be ſaved:* and *Cleanſe your Hands, ye Sinners, and purify your Hearts, ye double minded:* Jam. iv. 8. and ſo again, Ezek. xviii. 31. *Make you a new Heart, and a new Spirit.* All of which carry in them, the Heart's being turned from the Love of Sin, and cleanſed, and purified, from that vicious Inclination, and Delight, which it has to the Ways of Sin. In Repentance, there muſt be an inward, hearty, Deteſtation, and Abhorrence, of every Thing that is contrary to the holy Law of God, and diſpleaſing to him. There muſt be a ſincere Willingneſs to part with all Sin, even the leaſt, and that which has been dear to a Man, as a right Eye, or right Hand. This turning of the Heart from Sin, is, in Scripture, called, Eph. iv. 22. *a putting off the Old Man, which is corrupt, according to deceitful Luſts*; Col. iii. 5. A *mortifying the Members, which are upon the Earth*; Gal. v. 24. A *crucifying the Fleſh, with it's Affections, and Luſts*; and a *being dead unto Sin.* Rom. vi. 11. That is, the Appetites, and Luſtings, to Sin and Evil, which uſed to prevail in the depraved Soul, are now brought under, and ſubdued, and become like to one mortified, crucified, ſlain; or, at leaſt, that has received his Death's Wound; ſo that they have, no longer, the Life, Power, and Vigour, to rule, and govern, the Soul, as they had heretofore: and thus the Man becometh freed from Sin, and it no more reigneth in his mortal Body, that he ſhould obey it in the Luſts thereof.

When there is this habitual turning from Sin, in the Heart, that the Man can truly ſay, with *Paul*, Rom. vii. 15. *That which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I*; when the Man ſincerely hateth Sin,

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as Sin, and therefore hateth all Sin; when he hateth it with a perfect Hatred, perfect in it's Nature, though not ſo in Degree; then is he a true and real Penitent, in the Sight of God, though he ſhould not be able, always, to keep himſelf pure from every Tranſgreſſion. For the Heart is that which God chiefly looketh at; and if that be right in his Sight, if that be truly turned from the Love of Sin, and be ſet againſt it, though, through Weakneſs, and Inadvertancy, or the Power of Temptations, the Man may fall into any particular Act of Sin, ſhort of an abſolute Renunciation of the Lord his God, yet, the merciful, and good God, for Chriſt's Sake, will graciouſly overlook it, and accept of him as a true Penitent, a real Convert; yea, though the Man ſhould have no Opportunity to expreſs his inward Hatred of that Sin, and manifeſt to the World his Repentance of it, by any ſuch outward Acts as are the viſible Signs thereof. But then,

2. The penitent Sinner muſt, in his Life, turn from all Sin, as he has Opportunity therefor. It is the vain Pretence of ſome, their Hearts are good, they ſay, while their Lives are ſtark naught. If, therefore, there ſhould be an Opportunity given to the Sinner, by the Continuance of his Life in this World, after his being firſt renewed unto Repentance, to manifeſt that he has an inward Hatred of Sin prevailing in his Heart, by the outward Acts of forſaking his former ſinful Courſes, ſhuning, and reſiſting, the Temptations thereto; he muſt not, then, content himſelf with ſaying, or imagining, that he hateth all Wickedneſs in his Heart, and, yet, at the ſame Time, allow himſelf in the Practice of it; but, he muſt make it his conſtant Care, and ſerious Endeavour, to abſtain from all Sin. For, if he continueth to walk in any Way of Wickedneſs, by doing thoſe Things which the Divine Law forbideth, or by leaving undone what

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it requireth, knowingly, and designedly so, he will have great Reason to question the Sincerity of his Heart, whether it be truly turned from Sin, or no; yea, rather, he will have Cause to conclude, that his Heart is not washed from Wickedness; because a solicitous Care to avoid every sinful Thing, out of Regard to God, and our own eternal Interest, is one of the best Evidences of the Heart's Aversion to Sin, and a clear Sign of Uprightness: which occasioned the *Psalmist*'s saying, Psal. xviii. 23. *I was upright before him, and have kept myself from mine Iniquity.* Thus a Tree is known by it's Fruit; which is our *Saviour*'s Argument, Matth. vii. 16---20. *Ye shall know them by their Fruits;---every good Tree bringeth forth good Fruit, but a corrupt Tree bringeth forth evil Fruit; a good Tree cannot bring forth evil Fruit, neither can a corrupt Tree bring forth good Fruit:---- wherefore, by their Fruits, ye shall know them.* And therefore unto the inward Hatred of all Sin, there must be added the outward Abstinence from every Thing that we know to be contrary to the Mind, and Will, of God, concerning us. The penitent Sinner must abhor Sin, in his Heart, and abstain from it, in his Life; lest, under a Pretence of Honouring the Lord, in his Heart, he cast Dishonour, and Reproach upon him, by his Actions. There must be, as much as in him lieth, an actual turning from all his Transgressions. He that stole, must steal no more; he that used himself to swear vainly, must swear no more; he that addicted himself to lying, must lie no more; he that accustomed himself to Drunkenness, must be drunk no more; and so of all other Vices, and Sins, he must no more allow himself to do that abominable Thing, which the Soul of the Lord hateth.

Repentance, it is true, is progressive, and not wrought up to the highest Degrees of Perfection at once, nor, indeed, in this Life; but, notwithstanding,

ſtanding, the Sinner muſt purſue, more and more, the Attainment of the Maſtery over his Luſts, and Paſſions, and more thorowly cleanſe his Hands, as well as his Heart, from all Wickedneſs, that, if poſſible, he may abſtain from the very Appearance of Evil, and keep himſelf pure from every Tranſgreſſion. Particularly, he muſt ſet himſelf to oppoſe, and mortify all that his Conſcience, enlightened by the Word of God, telleth him is ſinful. For, *Happy is he, who condemneth not himſelf, in that Thing which he alloweth.* Rom. xiv. 22.

In ſhort, it muſt be a Man's fixed Reſolution, and ſteady Endeavour, not to allow himſelf in any known ſinful Thing whatever. And, if the prevailing, ſteady, Bent of the Mind, ſtand fixed againſt all Sin, and it be the ſincere, and great, Care of his Life, to avoid it, though many may be the Imperfections, and Failings, which, after all, will be found in ſuch an one, yet, is ſuch a Man one that, in the Goſpel Senſe, heartily forſaketh all Sin, and is ſo far a true Penitent, in the Sight of God, who, according to the Tenor of his Covenant, in Chriſt Jeſus, will overlook his Failings, and accept of him to Mercy.

This is the firſt Part of Repentance, a ſincere, and hearty, forſaking of all Sin; I proceed to the ſecond, viz.

[II.] The periſhing Sinner muſt be exceeding Careful, to lead a vertuous, and holy Life, in an univerſal Obedience unto all the Commands of God. This is the other Part of Repentance, which conſiſteth, not only in a turning from that which is Evil, but, in a doing that which is Good. And it is a very neceſſary Part of Repentance, which always meaneth the Amendment of the Heart, and Life; a being, and doing better, than heretofore we were wont to be, and do. Therefore the Prophet *Jeremiah* called upon the People to repent, in theſe Terms, Jer. xxvi. 13. *Therefore, now,*

now, amend your Ways, and your Doings, and obey the Voice of the Lord, your God. As the Sinner is to turn from Sin, ſo he muſt return to his Duty to God. Repentance, and Amendment, do not lie wholly in Negatives, and a not doing the ill Things that a Man has been heretofore accuſtomed to, but they conſiſt alſo in Poſitives, in a performing all that Duty which is required of him. He that *putteth off the old Man, ---- muſt put on the new Man, which, after God, is created in Righteouſneſs, and true Holineſs.* Eph. iv. 22, 24. The penitent Sinner muſt *bring forth Fruits, meet for Repentance*; Matth. iii. 8. he muſt not remain barren, and unfruitful, but yield ſuch Fruits as are the genuine Product, and Evidence, of Repentance, even ſuch Fruits as are anſwerable to his Pretentions, and evidential that he has a new Heart in him, and that he leadeth a new Life; that is, the Fruits of holy Obedience unto God; a walking in all the Ordinances, and Commandments, of the Lord, blameleſs, which, before his Repentance, he had no juſt Regard to. Hence the Terms run in this Strain, Iſa. lv. 7. *Let the Wicked forſake his Way, ---- and let him return unto the Lord.* That is, let him return to his Duty, and Allegiance, unto God, as his rightful Sovereign, and acknowledge the Divine Authority over him, and ſubmit himſelf entirely to the Government of the Will of God, in all Things concerning him. Thus God, by his Prophet, informs us who is the true Penitent, ſaying, Ezek. xxxiii. 14, 15. *When I ſay unto the Wicked, thou ſhalt ſurely die; if he turn from his Sin, and do that which is lawful and right; if the Wicked reſtore the Pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the Statutes of Life, without committing Iniquity; he ſhall ſurely Live; he ſhall not die.* Where we may obſerve, that the Sinner muſt not only *turn from his Sin*, but he muſt *do that which is lawful and right*; he muſt yield Obedience to the Divine

Commands, or *walk in the Statutes of Life.* For the Will of God, made known to us, is the only ſure and certain Meaſure of Right, and Wrong, Truth, and Falſhood; and therefore the only perfect Rule of our Duty, and ſure Guide in the Way of Life. It will be no true Repentance, ſuch as God requireth of us, and will accept at our Hands, ſuch as becometh our Nature, Relation, and Dependance, if it be not accompanied with Obedience, and that both of Heart, and of Life.

1. There muſt be an inward Principle of Obedience. That is, It muſt be the fixed Purpoſe, Intention, and Bent, of the Heart of the Penitent, to obey the Will of God, in all that he knoweth to be his Duty. The Heart, and Soul, in the more conſtant Temper, and Diſpoſition of them, muſt be ready enclined to perform the whole good, and acceptable, and perfect, Will of God, as he hath revealed his Mind, and Will, to us, in his holy Word. Thus the Heart muſt become found in the Statutes of God, by a ſteady Conſciouſneſs of the Obligations we lie under, to obey whatſoever the Lord our God requireth of us, and in a ſerious Fixedneſs of Mind, to make his Will the Rule of our Walk. Thus there muſt be an inward Affection to the Things of God, an hearty Love, and Delight, in his Law, and a Readineſs, at all Times, to comply with his Precepts. So muſt we be able to ſay, with the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. cxix. 128. *I eſteem all thy Precepts, concerning all Things, to be right.* For this is the Character of the thrice bleſſed Man, Pſal. i. 2. *His Delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in his Law doth he meditate, Day, and Night.* When it is the conſtant habitual Temper of the Soul to be obedient unto the Will of God, this will argue, that there is a real, thorow, Change wrought in the Heart, that it is New, in all the Powers of it, otherwiſe it would not be fixed for new Obedience, but remain unſubject

ſubject to the Law of God ; this inferreth that we are born again, are become the Children of God, are not under the Dominion of Sin, but under Grace ; and that, therefore, we are no longer in a periſhing Condition, but have eternal Life begun in our Souls, and reigning in us, by that *Grace, which reigneth, through Righteouſneſs, by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* Rom. v. 21.

Though ſuch an one ſhould not have the Opportunity to manifeſt the ſincere Deſire, and fixed Purpoſe, of his Mind, in this, or that, particular Inſtance of Obedience, nevertheleſs, God will graciouſly accept the Heart, that is thus devoted to his Service; and he will eſteem the Man a true Penitent whoſe Delight it is to do his Will. In this Senſe thoſe Words of the *Apoſtle* may well be underſtood, as truly as of the particular Charity which they firſtly relate to ; 2 Cor. viii. 12. *If there be firſt a willing Mind, it is accepted, accord ng to that a Man hath, and not according to that he hath not.* This holdeth true, with Reſpect to our Charity, and Love, to God, as well as to our Love, and Charity, to our Neighbour. So that ſhould Death overtake ſuch a Man, who has his Heart ſo ſet for Obedience to the Divine Commandment, before he ſhould have the Opportunity to make any Progreſs in a Life of Holineſs, the Willingneſs of his Mind would be accepted by God, in the Room of his Performances ; and he would be received to the promiſed Rewards of the heavenly World, though he ſhould have no more than truly, and heartily, ſet out in the Way thither, while he was in this. This was the Caſe of the penitent Thief, upon the Croſs, who, by the ſovereign Grace of God, experienced a wonderful Change in his Soul, from a Love to Sin, unto a Love to God, and Chriſt, and Holineſs, but a few Minutes before he expired ; ſo that he had no Opportunity to lead a Life of holy Obedience, nor, in-

deed, ſo much as to give any Evidence of his Repentance, ſave only by his immediate reproving of his fellow Sinner, owning the Attrociouſneſs of his Crime, and expreſſing ſome Truſt, and Dependance, on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and theſe all in a Breath; and yet, we find Chriſt ſaying to him, upon the certain Knowledge he had of the real Change in his Heart, Luk. xxiii. 43. *Verily, I ſay unto thee, to Day ſhalt thou be with me in Paradiſe.*

SERMON

SERMON XIV.

ACTS XVI. 30.

And said, Sirs, What must I do to be saved?

I Have entered upon the Consideration of the great Duty of Repentance, as necessary to Salvation; and am upon the View of the Nature of this Duty, and have shewed you that it intendeth the forsaking of all Sin, in Heart, and Life; and a living vertuously in Obedience to the Divine Commands; in order to which there must be an inward Principle of Obedience. I now go on to say,

2. As there is Opportunity, there must be an honest sincere Endeavour after an actual Obedience to the Will of God. It will not suffice for any to say, I love God, and love his Commandments; but we must endeavour to live unto God, and Holiness, by conforming of our whole Walk to the Rules of the Divine Precepts. *For whoso keepeth his Word, in him verily is the Love of God perfected.* 1 Joh. ii. 5. It must be the determined Resolution of our Wills, and our daily Care

to put that Reſolution into Practice, to lead obedient Lives, to do Juſtly, to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with our God. And, indeed, if the Heart be true, in it's inward Principle of Obedience, it will put a Man upon being holy in all Manner of Converſation, and Godlineſs, and that in Obedience to the commanding Will of God. So, *a good Man, out of the good Treaſure of the Heart, bringeth forth good Things.* Matth. xii. 35. And that our Repentance may be genuine, uniform, and ſincere, our Obedience muſt reſpect all the Commandments of God univerſally, and particularly thoſe we have been moſt defective in, and are moſt difficult to Fleſh and Blood to perform.

1. The penitent Sinner muſt endeavour after an univerſal Obedience, without Exception. The Divine Law is one entire Body of Rules of holy Living, flowing from the ſupream Fountain of Dominion, Wiſdom, and Holineſs; and becauſe the ſame Authority, Reaſon, and Purity, is ſtamped upon, and runneth through, the whole of the Divine Commandments, therefore, the Sinner, in returning to his Duty to his God, muſt be careful to obey every known Command, without ſuffering any one of them, deſignedly, to be diſregarded by him. The earneſt Deſire of his Heart muſt be that of the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. cxix. 5, 6. *O! that my Ways were directed to keep thy Statutes! then ſhall I not be aſhamed, when I have Reſpect unto all thy Commandments:* And accordingly it muſt be his daily Practice to order his Steps in the Word of God, that he may cleanſe his Way, by taking heed thereto. He muſt not content himſelf, and think this to be enough, that he is obedient unto ſome of the Divine Precepts, ſuch as, perhaps, are more agreeable unto his Temper, and Condition; but he muſt be careful, as much as in him lieth, as he has Opportunity, and a Call thereto, to obſerve,

and

and do them all. For, if he wilfully allow himſelf in Diſobedience to any known Precept, it will argue that his Heart is not right with God; and that the Duty which he performeth, is not attended ſo much in Obedience to the Will of God, as from ſome other Principle, and Motive; and therefore all that he doth will be far from an acceptable Obedience. Hence the Apoſtle *James* ſaid, Jam. ii. 10. *Whoſoever ſhall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one Point, he is guilty of all.* Becauſe a wilful Tranſgreſſion of the Divine Law, in any one Point, proceedeth from an inward Principle of Diſobedience; which is, in the Nature of it, equally levelled againſt the whole Law, under like Circumſtances, and Temptations.

The penitent Sinner, therefore, muſt be careful to live in the Practice of all known moral Duties; he muſt worſhip the Lord his God, in Publick, and in Private, and thus give unto the Lord the Glory that is due unto his Name; he muſt think, and ſpeak, reverently of the holy Name of God, and not allow himſelf to profane it at any Time; he muſt deal juſtly with all Men, be true to his Word, and Promiſe, and fulfil his Engagements, and Betruſtments; his Lips muſt be under the Law of Kindneſs, and his Hands be ready to help the Indigent, and relieve the Neceſſitous; his Heart muſt be enlarged with an univerſal Benevolence, and his Light ſhine in all the Offices of Kindneſs, and Beneficence, even to all that are about him; and he muſt, knowingly, give no Man any juſt Occaſion to complain of his injuring of him, in any of his Intereſts.

He muſt alſo diligently attend upon all the Duties of inſtituted Religion, and devoutly, and heartily, ſerve his God, in all the Ways of his own Appointment. He muſt remember to keep his Day holy, through out the whole of it, free from all Diverſions, and all unneceſſary Labours;

he muſt wait upon God in all his holy Ordinances, take his Mark, and Livery, upon him, and partake of the Food of his Soul, which is provided for him, in the Houſe, and at the Table, of the Lord. For, how has he returned unto the Lord, as a true Penient, who will not be perſwaded to do the Things which God requireth of him, but liveth in the ſinful Neglect of them?

Yea, the ſincere Penitent ſhould endeavour after the greateſt Conſtancy in his Obedience, without allowing of himſelf in any wilful Interruptions therein; becauſe God always has the ſame Right to his Service, and Obedience, at one Time, as much as another.

This univerſal Obedience is what the penitent Sinner ſhould carefully endeavour after, as he has Opportunity for it; and humbly mourn over all his Defects, and Short-comings, in Duty. This is what our God requireth, and moſt earneſtly wiſheth, of all that would be truly his People, ſaying, Deut. v. 29. *Oh! that there were ſuch an Heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my Commandments, always.*

2. The penitent Sinner muſt particularly ſet himſelf to the Practice of thoſe Duties, and Vertues, which he has, heretofore, been moſt defective in. It was his Sin, and Guilt, that he, formerly, neglected to do thoſe Things that were required of him, as it was that he did thoſe Things that were forbidden to him, and therefore, in his Repentance, he muſt not only abſtain from the forbidden Fruit, which he has, heretofore, delighted in, but, he muſt evidence the Truth of it, by endeavouring carefully to perform the various Duties of Piety, Juſtice, Sobriety, Temperance, Meekneſs, Humility, Charity, and the like, which he has been, formerly, averſe to.

Thus, if he hath been one that, through the Pride of his Countenance, would not call upon God,

God, but lived without Prayer, in his Closet, and in his Family, he must, now, be so much the more exact, and constant, in this Part of his Duty to God, and his own Soul. When *Saul* became a thorow Penitent, it was remarked of him, Acts ix. 11. *Behold, he prayeth!*

Or, if he hath been remarkable for a profane Mouth, and a foul Tongue, for filthy, and corrupt Communication, he must endeavour, now, after the greater Eminency in the Sobriety, Purity, and Modesty, of his Speech, and the vertuous Government of an unruly Tongue.

So, if he hath been notorious for Tavern-haunting, setting long at the Wine Press, until new Wine enflame him, and used often to intoxicate himself with strong Drink, he must, now, be more exemplary in the Virtues of Temperance, and Moderation, and carefully shun the Places, and Company, by which he was enticed, and overcome.

And, if he hath been infamous for violent, and unruly Passions, for Cruelty, Severity, Wrath, for Oppressions, and Unkindnesses to his Neighbours, he must, now, endeavour to be as remarkable for his Patience, Meekness, Gentleness, Forbearance, Long-suffering, Equity, Brotherly-kindness, Goodness; and in this Way let the World about him see, that the Wolf is converted into a Lamb, by the Power of the Grace of God that is in him.

Remarkable is the Instance of the *Jaylor* in my Context; before his Conversion, he was a Man of a very fierce, and cruel, Disposition; whereas no sooner does the Grace of God take Possession of him, and make him a true Penitent, but you find his Temper mightily altered, and those very Servants of God, whom he had just before maligned, insulted, and abused, he now *takes into his House, washes their Stripes, and setteth Meat before them*; and so treats them with all proper Expressions

preſſions of Kindneſs, and Benevolence. So the true Penitent will be exemplary in thoſe Vertues, in which he was, heretofore, moſt defective.

3. The penitent Sinner muſt ſet himſelf to the Practice of thoſe Duties, which are moſt hard, and difficultly performed. There are ſome Duties, in the *Chriſtian* Life, abundantly more hard, and difficult, than ſome others, and require the greateſt of our Skill, and Vigilance, and the exerting our Strength, or we ſhall not be likely to practiſe them, as we ought to do. There are ſome Things which are our Duty, as *Chriſtians*, which yet are ſo eaſy, ſo agreeable to the humane Nature, and ſo ſuitable unto our Circumſtances, that the natural Man, without the Aids of ſupernatural Grace, readily complyeth with them ; while he can, by no Arguments, be prevailed upon, to regard ſuch other Duties, as are attended with more of Difficulty. But the true Penitent muſt not only apply himſelf unto ſuch Duties, as may be obſerved with the greater Eaſe, and without any great Oppoſition to his natural Temper, and Inclinations, or worldly Intereſts, but, he muſt, as well, make Conſcience of performing thoſe Duties, and practiſing thoſe Vertues, which are moſt hard to Fleſh, and Blood, and are moſt croſs to his Conſtitution, and Temptations, and moſt oppoſite to his carnal Views; and that becauſe he muſt be careful to practiſe all Vertues, as well as to reform all Vices. Here I will take the Liberty to mention two only ; viz.

1. The penitent Sinner muſt be ready to forgive thoſe that injure him. This is a very hard, and difficult Leſſon, in *Chriſtianity*, and what is taught in no other School but that of Chriſt's. Corrupt Nature prompts us to revenge Injuries ; the Philophers of Old thought it argued a mean Soul, to bear Indignities, and Affronts, and taught Revenge, as an Evidence of an high, and great, and

noble

noble Spirit: but *our Maſter*, Chriſt, better underſtood both the Nature of God, and of Vertue, and, by his own Example, and by Precept, hath taught us quite otherwiſe. And hard, and difficult, as it is to perform this Duty, yet, he that will be a true Penitent, a real *Chriſtian*, muſt, in ſome good Meaſure, come up to it, and lay aſide all Thoughts of Revenge, and ſuppreſs his undue Anger, and Reſentments, and be ready to render good for evil. 1 Theſ. v. 15. *See that none render Evil for Evil, unto any Man; but ever follow that which is Good, both among yourſelves, and unto all Men.* How does he forſake all Sin, who does not abſtain from all revengful Retalliations, and ſubdue an implacable, and malicious Spirit, which is moſt contrary to the infinitely good God, and is agreeable only unto the infernal Spirit? And what is there more poſitively forbidden in the ſacred Pages? Rom. xii. 19. *Dearly beloved, avenge not yourſelves, but rather give Place unto Wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, ſaith the Lord.* Or, how doth he practiſe all Vertues, and Duties, who will not exemplify, in his Life, thoſe amiable Vertues of Meekneſs, Patience, Charity, and a forgiving Spirit? Or, how can he, upon good Grounds, hope to be forgiven, who will not forgive? when our bleſſed *Saviour* hath made it a Badge of our Diſcipleſhip, and has taught us to pray, in his excellent Platform, Matth. vi. 12. *Forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors:* and added upon it this cogent Argument, ℣. 14, 15. *If you forgive Men their Treſpaſſes, your heavenly Father will alſo forgive you; but if ye forgive not Men their Treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive your Treſpaſſes.*

2. The other Inſtance I ſhall name is, that of making Reſtitution unto thoſe whom we have injured. This is, often Times, an exceeding hard, and difficult Task, and what many, who would be accounted true Penitents, are not eaſily perſwaded

ſwaded to comply with. But, notwithſtanding all the Difficulty, in the Thing itſelf, or the Circumſtances attending it, and all the Reluctance of our own Minds thereto, ariſing from the Apprehenſions any may have of their expoſing themſelves to Reproach, yet, it is a Duty indiſpenſibly incumbent * upon every one that has injured his Neighbour, in any Inſtance, to make him juſt Satisfaction therefor; nor can he be a true Penitent without his beſt Endeavours for this End. For if any Man hath injured an other, by Force, or by Fraud, by violently taking from him, or craftily, underhandedly, by tricking, and overreaching of him, by falſe Accounts, or in Form of Law, or any other Ways deprived his Neighbour, of what he himſelf has no juſt, equitable, and conſcionable Right, and Claim to, he has, herein, done to his Neighbour a Piece of Injuſtice: and it will not be ſufficient, to ſuch an one, to leave off, or forbear, the committing of the like Acts of Injuſtice, for the future, but he muſt pay the Debt he has already contracted, by making Amends for the Injury he has formerly done. He continueth the Injuſtice upon his Neighbour, until he maketh him ample Amends, by reſtoring what he had ſo unrighteouſly taken away from him; and therefore he can be no true Penitent while he deſignedly continueth the Injury, nor until he makes Reſtitution of the full Damage, or at leaſt peremptorily determineth that he will do ſo, the firſt Opportunity that he ſhall have for it. So that the penitent Sinner muſt reſolve with *Zacheus*, Luk. xix. 8. *If I have taken any Thing, from any Man,* (wrongfully,) *I will reſtore him,* (at leaſt the full Value, if not) *fourfold.*

Thus, I have endeavoured to deſcribe unto you, the Nature of true Evangelical Repentance, that

* *Non remittitur Peccatum, donec reſtituitur oblatum.*

Repentance

Repentance which the Goſpel of God our Saviour requireth of us, and ſo have ſhewn you what the periſhing Sinner muſt do, in this Reſpect, that he may obtain eternal Salvation; namely, that he muſt ſincerely, and heartily forſake all Sin, and be exceeding careful to lead a virtuous, and holy Life, in the Practice of all known Duties, even the moſt hard, and difficult. And this, I take it, is that Repentance which God commandeth all Men, wherever the Goſpel is preached, to obſerve, and which is abſolutely, and indiſpenſibly neceſſary to Salvation; which I ſhould, now, proceed to evidence, and to ſhew what the Sinner muſt do to obtain it; but I ſhall conclude the preſent Diſcourſe with making ſome Reflections on what has been ſaid.

USE. I. If Repentance be ſuch as we have heard, then it is to be feared, that there are many who flatter, and delude themſelves, with vain Imaginations, and falſe Hopes, of their being true Penitents, when they really are not. I cannot ſuppoſe that there are any, who have lived under the preaching of the Goſpel, but what have received ſome Conviction, that they muſt repent of their Sins, ſome Time or other; and they have ſome ſecret Purpoſes within themſelves, that, ſome Time before they die, they will alter their preſent Courſe of Life, and walk more conformably to the *Chriſtian* Law, that they may get ſafe to Heaven at laſt. There are but few, if any, ſo hardened in their Sins, as fixedly to reſolve they never will repent.

But then, the very great Miſchief of it is, that many are apt to miſtake about the Nature of Repentance, and willingly deceive themſelves, by too eaſily taking up with that, for Repentance, which really is not ſo; or, at moſt, is but a Part, and that too the ſmalleſt Part, of it. They pacify their Minds, and quiet their Conſciences, with

ſomething

ſomething that looks like Repentance, and ſome fond Hopes that they are Penitents; ſo they *feed upon Aſhes, a deceived Heart hath turned them aſide*; Iſa. xliv. 20. Whereas, if they would but give themſelves Time to think cloſely, and ſurvey themſelves in the Glaſs of the Divine Oracles, they would awaken out of their vain Dream, and plainly ſee, that they are yet in their Sins, in the Gall of Bitterneſs, and Bond of Iniquity, and therefore are not in the Way that leadeth unto Salvation.

Poſſibly, there may be ſome, who, through the Power of a vertuous Education, and a docile, and ingenuous, Temper, may have kept themſelves free from the groſſer Tranſgreſſions, ſo that no Man has wherewith juſtly to accuſe them, and they may be able to ſay, of external moral Duties, as the young Man, in the Goſpel, Luk. xviii. 21. *All theſe have I kept from my Youth up:* And from hence they conclude, that they are among the Number of true Penitents, and that nothing more is required of them. As for their leſſer Errors, in their Conduct, they ſee no great Harm in them, nor are they ſenſible of all the Evils that are in their Hearts; and therefore are at no Pains to purge themſelves from prevailing Pride, and Vanity, Cenſoriouſneſs, and Worldly-mindedneſs, and the like. Though ſuch, like the *Phariſee*, are ready to ſay, *God, I thank thee, that I am not as other Men are, Extortioners, Unjuſt, Adulterers, or even as this Publican*, yet are they not true Penitents, in the Sight of God, nor ſhall they *go down to their Houſe juſtified*; Luk. xviii. 11, 14. Becauſe the Heart, as well as Life, muſt be cleanſed.

There are others, perhaps, who will cry, they are ſorry for their Sins, and, it may be, will ſhed many Tears, when they are reproved for them; and all this be but an affected Sorrow, or the natural eaſy flow of their Paſſions; and be nothing

hearty

hearty and ſincere: or, if they have ſome inward real Grief, it is not becauſe they have acted contrary unto Right, and Equity, and done that which is moſt offenſive to the great, and holy God; but only becauſe they find they have diſobliged ſome of their Friends, or ſome Way or other hurt themſelves, in ſome of their worldly Intereſt; and therefore all their Sorrow, and Tears, have nothing of true Repentance in them, ſo long as they can ſtill hug their Luſts, and will not let them go.

Many others may have ſome weak Purpoſes for a Life of Religion, and accordingly do ſomething towards the reforming of their Lives, and begin to leave off ſome of their evil Practices, and perform ſome neglected Duties; but then their Purpoſes are but weak, and their Reformations are very partial; they only waſh the Outſide, and reform in a few externals, while their Hearts remain full of Pollution, and they love the Vices they ſeem to part with: or they reform only ſuch Sins as moſtly expoſe them to the Obſervation, and Reſentments, of Men, while they cheriſh thoſe which they ſee to be leſs hurtful to them; or, it may be, all their Duties they do to be ſeen of Men, or attend only thoſe that are moſt eaſy, and agreeable to their Temper, and Condition, while they deſire to be excuſed as to ſuch other Acts of Obedience as are contrary to their Inclination, or are difficult to perform; or all their Obedience is not the Obedience of the Heart, and becauſe God has commanded them, but only to oblige a Friend, and to ſerve themſelves.

Many, again, will promiſe fair, but will not be at the Pains to ſhun the Temptations by which they are eaſily drawn away. How many have been convinced, by ſad Experience, that the bad Company, they aſſociate themſelves with, has led them into almoſt all Manner of Miſchief, and overthrown

thrown their Purpoſes, which they have ſome Times had, for a Life of Religion? And yet they will not be at the Pains to ſhake off their old Companions, and forſake thoſe fooliſh ones, that they may live. How many have been made ſick, by their Intemperance, and have been convinced, that they have hurt their Bodies, their Names, their Intereſt, by their Drunkenneſs? and now they have ſeemed to be mighty ſorry, and have promiſed to leave off their intemperate Drinking; and yet would not croſs their Humor ſo much as to ſhun the Places, and Company, where, they could not but know, they ſhould be entangled again, in their old Sin.

And becauſe they find, they have had ſome Sort of Sorrow for their Sins, they entertain ſome Purpoſes of Amendment, and, it may be, reform ſome Evils, they were addicted to, and now give themſelves to a Round of external Duties, of reading, and hearing, the Word of God, attending upon Prayer, and Sacraments, &c. they are ready to conclude favourably of themſelves, and think they are true Penitents, and doubt not but they ſhall be ſaved. Thus they flatter, and delude, themſelves, with a good Opinion of themſelves, that they are what they really are not, and with a confident Expectation of what they never ſhall poſſeſs, without a more thorow Repentance than ever they were yet Maſters of. For, let all ſuch Self-Deceivers know, that all their external Sorrow, and Tears, all their faint Purpoſes, and outward Reformations, are, at beſt, but ſome of the Out-Lines of Repentance; and are ineffectual unto Salvation; unleſs they are accompanied with a thorow Change of the Heart, from the Love of Sin, to the Love of God, and Holineſs; and ſuch a Change in their Lives, as carrieth in it, their ſincere, and honeſt, Endeavours to abſtain from all Wickedneſs, though ever ſo dear to them,

and

and to practiſe every known Duty, though ever ſo contrary unto Fleſh, and Blood, and jarring with their carnal Intereſt, and Views. For they have not truly repented, who hug any Sin in their Boſom, and roll any Iniquity, as a ſweet Morſel, under their Tongues, and refuſe to part with it; nor they that live in a wilful Diſobedience to any one of the Commandments of God, and refuſe to do what the Lord our God requireth of them; as ſuppoſe Prayer, or inſtituted Worſhip, or the Forgiving of Injuries. The Man muſt become a New Man, in Heart, and in Life, in Principle, and in Action, before he is a real Penitent; and with all the Repentance he is, or can be, Maſter of, without this, he will certainly periſh at laſt. Job xx. 12---14. *Though Wickedneſs be ſweet in his Mouth, though he hide it under his Tongue, though he ſpare it, and forſake it not, but keep it ſtill within his Mouth; yet his Meat, in his Bowels, is turned, it is the Gall of Aſps within him:* it will prove exceeding bitter, and pernicious to him, in the Concluſion.

2. Let every Sinner, here before the Lord, be perſwaded ſincerely, and heartily, to repent, that he may not periſh. This is the proper Buſineſs of every one of us all; for I know not any one that can have nothing to do with Repentance, but he that has never ſinned; which is not the Condition of any one upon the Face of God's Earth: for, Alaſs! we are all of us Sinners, having been guilty, in many Things, and daily; ſo that if God ſhould be ſtrict to mark our Iniquity againſt us, there would be enough, in the beſt of us, to procure our everlaſting Condemnation.

And how greatly are we advantaged, by the Light of the Goſpel, ſhewing to us what is ſinful, and wherein the real Nature of Repentance lieth, and the Advantage it will be to us; and providing for us the bleſſed Help of the Holy and Divine

Spirit, to enable us to go thorow the great Work of an Evangelical Repentance? The Heathen World were under mighty Diſadvantages, to what we are; they walked in Darkneſs, and had but very obſcure Notions of Repentance, the Nature, and the Benefits of it, or how to attain to it; God ſeemed to bear with their Wickedneſs, and overlook their Diſorders, as though he regarded them not, while he neither plainly ſhewed them their Duty, nor provided for the Performance of it: but now, by, the Light of the Goſpel, he hath made full Proviſion for our Repentance, ſhewing us wherein it conſiſteth, and how we may attain to it; and therefore it concerneth us, in a ſpecial Manner, to repent of all our Wickedneſs, and return to our Duty to our God. Said the *Apoſtle*, Acts xvii. 30. *The Times of this Ignorance, God winked at, but, now, hath commanded all Men, every where, to repent.* Now, that the Light of the Goſpel ſhineth upon us; now, that God hath told us our Duty, and provided the beſt Helps for our performing it; now, we ſhould be peculiarly concerned to walk as the Children of the Day, and put off the Works of Darkneſs, and have no Fellowſhip with them, leſt, we at laſt find, to our Coſt, that God will not bear with us, with whom he has taken ſo much Pains, as he does with the Heathen World; but will puniſh us very ſeverely for our wilful perſiſting in our evil Ways, when we were ſhown the Danger of them, and had all proper Means to direct, and turn, us into the right Way. So we find our bleſſed *Saviour upbraiding the Cities, wherein moſt of his mighty Works were done, becauſe they repented not*; Matth. xi. 20, 21, 22. though he came preaching Repentance; and pronouncing an heavy Wo upon them, for their Incorrigibleneſs, ſaying, *Wo unto thee, Chorazin, Wo unto thee, Bethſaida; for if the mighty Works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre, and Sidon,*

they

they would have repented long ago, in Sackcloth, and Aſhes: but I ſay unto you, it ſhall be more tollerable for Tyre, and Sidon, in the Day of Judgment, than for you.

Let us then be prevailed upon, this Day, to ſet ourſelves, in good Earneſt, to break off from our Iniquities by Righteouſneſs, and from our Tranſgreſſions by returning unto God: and let us be very particular in our Repentance of all known Sins, both in our Acknowledgement, and Confeſſion, of them, with deep Humiliation for them, before the Lord; and in our ſpecial Care to put every Iniquity from us, without ſparing the moſt darling, or allowing ourſelves in any Sin for the Time to come. As to Sins of Ignorance, doubtleſs, God will graciouſly accept of a general Confeſſion, and Repentance for them, becauſe a particular one is not to be had; but he requireth a particular Repentance for our particular known Sins. Therefore *David* ſaid, Pſal. xix. 12, 13. *Who can underſtand his Errors; cleanſe thou me from ſecret Faults; keep back thy Servant from preſumptuous Sins, let them not have Dominion over me.*

And then, let us be exceedingly careful that our Repentance be thorow, go into our whole Soul, and be levelled againſt all Sin. It is the being the Servant of Sin that expoſeth a Perſon to the Wrath of Heaven. Col. iii. 6. *The Wrath of God cometh on the Children of Diſobedience.* The good Man, the true Penitent, may fall into Sin, but he is not a Child of Diſobedience, he is not the Servant of Sin; no; he is made free from Sin, and is become the Servant, and a Child, of God. Let us therefore be careful in making thorow Work, in our ſearching out all Leaven, and put it far away from us. The Character of the ſincere Penitents is that, Pſal. cxix. 3. *They do no Iniquity, they walk in his Ways.* One reigning Sin, one unmortified Luſt, though it may ſeem to

a ſmall one, (ſuppoſe Lying, for Inſtance,) will prove the Deſtruction of a Man's Soul forever, if not repented of. Therefore ſpare no Luſt, no *Agag*, though ever ſo gorgious in it's Attire, and delicate in it's Behaviour. For it will be a certain Argument that a Man is the Servant of Sin, if he liveth in Subjection to it. Therefore endeavour to get your Hearts cleanſed, and purged, from the Love of Sin; that the Love of Sin being mortified in you, you may be the leſs enclined to perpetrate any wicked Thing, and the more eaſily overcome Temptations to it. There may be many Conſiderations, which may reſtrain, or prevent, a Man from the actual committing of this, or that Wickedneſs, while yet he loveth it in his Heart, and, by his Love to it, evidences, to the Heart-ſearching God, that he is not a real Penitent, whatever he is thought of by Man. Hence the *Pſalmiſt* ſaid, Pſal. lxvi. 18. *If I regard Iniquity in my Heart, the Lord will not hear me.* Get, and keep, the Heart pure; baniſh from thence all atheiſtical, profane, and Irreligious Thoughts, all proud, revengful, malicious, impure, lewd, and diſcontented Thoughts, and ſuffer them not to find Lodging within you. Let it be the earneſt Deſire of your Souls, that all Sin may be thorowly mortified, and ſubdued, ſo as never more to reign in your mortal Bodies. Pray with the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. cxix. 133. *Order my Steps in thy Word, and let not any Iniquity have Dominion over me.*

Uſe your beſt Endeavours, that you may obtain a compleat Victory over Sin, and *Satan*, and the World, by maintaining a continual Conflict with them, ſtriving for the Maſtery; and think no Pains too much to reform your Heart, and Life. Be upon your Watch, and Guard, that you may be able to ſpye out your Danger, and may ward off the fiery Darts of the evil One. Apply your-

ſelves,

ſelves, with the greateſt Earneſtneſs, to the Blood of Chriſt, to procure the Death of Sin in your Soul, that you may be enabled to crucify the Fleſh, with it's Affections, and Luſts. The Blood of Chriſt, not only taketh away the Guilt, but, proveth the Deſtruction of Sin in the Soul; and the Conſideration of the Death of Chriſt, is one of the moſt powerful Arguments to Repentance, in that it, at the ſame Time, preſents us with a View of our Guilt, and the Deſerts of our Sins, and ſhews us the Mercy of God, through Chriſt, in his Readineſs to pardon us.

Let us, then, all of us, be perſwaded, thus to repent of, and forſake all our Sins, and to lead a Life of new Obedience, that we may not periſh, but be eternally ſaved: and do this now, without Delay, leſt you ſhould miſs of the only proper Opportunity for Repentance. Heb. iv. 1. *Let us fear, leſt a Promiſe being left us, of entring into his Reſt, any of you ſhould ſeem to come Short of it.* What can be more unreaſonable, than to defer a Matter of ſuch Conſequence to us, as Repentance is, unto a Time, which, at the beſt is moſt improper, and which yet, after all, we have no Aſſurance of?

And let us be very frequent in renewing of our Repentance, that, if poſſible, we may let no Sin eſcape us unrepented of. There is not a Day paſſes us, wherein the very beſt of us have not ſome Sin or other, of Thought, Word, or Deed, to charge ourſelves withal. Our daily Sins of Omiſſion, or Commiſſion, of Ignorance, and Infirmity, if not of Preſumption, ſhould put us upon calling ourſelves to an Account, at the Cloſe of every Day, and upon humbling of ourſelves, before God, confeſſing of our Tranſgreſſions to him, and imploring his pardoning Mercy, through the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, that we may be able to lay ourſelves down in Peace, with a comfortable Hope of God's being reconciled unto us.

And remember, for your Encouragement, how grateful, and pleaſing, it will be to Heaven, to ſee you become a real Penitent. Though, like the prodigal Son, you ſhould have wandered from your Father's Houſe, and have conſumed all your Subſtance in riotous Living, and have been reduced, with the Swine, to feed upon Husks, and not had enough of them neither to fill, and ſatisfy you; yet if, after all, you will come to your right Mind, and fixedly reſolve to return to your Father, and acknowledge your Fault, and be reſolute, and careful, to live in a dutiful Obedience, and Submiſſion, to his Will, for the Time to come, your heavenly Father is graciouſly ready to meet; and receive thee, and expreſs his moſt tender Compaſſions to thee, in freely forgiving all thy paſt Offences, in making abundant Proviſion for thy future Welfare, and in Welcoming of thee to his open Arms, with the moſt endearing Affection, and the higheſt Expreſſions of Joy. For thus we read, (with which I ſhall now conclude,) Luk. xv. 7. *There is Joy, in Heaven, over one Sinner that repenteth, more than over Ninety and Nine juſt Perſons, that need no Repentance*: and that becauſe, as the Father expreſſeth it, ℣. 24. *This my Son was dead, and is alive again, he was loſt, and is found.*

SERMON

SERMON XV.

ACTS XVI. 30.

And said, Sirs, What must I do to be saved?

THE Doctrine, which several Times hath been named, from these Words, you may remember, was this, viz.

Doc. That it is of highest Concernment to perishing Sinners, to be very solicitous, what they must do to be saved; or, to know, and practise, all that is necessary, in order to their Salvation.

I am upon the Third general Head under this Doctrine, namely,

III. That perishing Sinners must know, and practise, all that is necessary, in order to their Salvation; or, there is something to be done, by them, that they may be saved. They must know what is necessary to be known, and do what is necessary to be done, or they cannot reasonably hope to be saved. And as it is necessary to Salvation that a Person believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, so is it necessary that he repent of his Sins; these are the two comprehensive

prehenſive Duties which the Goſpel requireth of us. Having ſhewed you, what is to be underſtood by Faith in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the Neceſſity of it, and the Means to obtain it; I have entered upon the Conſideration of the Doctrine of Repentance, and propoſed,

I. To ſhew you, what that Repentance is, which is required of us.

II. To evidence, that ſuch a Repentance is abſolutely neceſſary unto Salvation.

III. To conſider, what the periſhing Sinner muſt do, to obtain this Repentance unto Salvation. I have endeavoured to ſet before you a diſtinct View of the Nature of true evangelical Repentance, as it conſiſteth, in a *forſaking all ſinful, and vicious, Courſes*, a being heartily ſorry, and aſhamed, that ever we have ſinned, having our Hearts ſet againſt all Sin, and honeſtly endeavouring, in our Lives, to abſtain, from every Kind of Sin, for the future; and *in leading a vertuous, and holy Life*, in Obedience to the Commandments of God, having our Hearts influenced by an inward Principle of Obedience, and our Life, as much as may be, under an actual Conformity unto the Divine Will, in all Things, without any wilful Exception; being particularly exemplary in thoſe Duties, and Vertues, we were moſt defective in, and ſincerely endeavouring the Practice of thoſe that are moſt hard, and difficult, to perform; being ready to forgive thoſe that injure us, and to make Reſtitution unto thoſe whom we may have injured. I ſhall now proceed,

II. To evidence, that ſuch a Repentance is abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation; and no Sinner, let his worldly Circumſtances be what they will, can reaſonably hope to be ſaved without it. The abſolute Neceſſity of this Repentance, in order to our being ſaved, will fully appear, if we do but

diligently

diligently hearken to the conſtant Language of the ſacred Scriptures, and the concurrent Voice of natural Conſcience; for both the Word of God, and the Reaſon of Mankind, aſſure us, that there can be no Salvation for any Sinner without Repentance.

1. Let us hearken to the conſtant Language of the holy Scripture, and we ſhall find that it is moſt plain, and full, and poſitive, in the demanding Repentance of every Sinner, as abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation. It is Divine Revelation, only, that acquainteth us, how, in what Way, and upon what Terms, a poor guilty Sinner may find Acceptance with God, and be eternally ſaved. This is a Path which the moſt penetrating Reaſon of Man would never have diſcovered becauſe it reſulteth from the Divine Will, and Pleaſure, which no Man could be able to diſcern, until God himſelf ſhould pleaſe to make it known. And we may be well aſſured, that, whatever the Divine Revelation plainly, and poſitively, requireth of the Sinner, in order to his Salvation, is abſolutely neceſſary to that End, and that there is no poſſible Way of obtaining the End without it; becauſe this Revelation is no other than the Will of God, made known to us, and ſhewing us what he requireth of us, what he inſiſteth upon, and peremptorily demandeth of us, as the Condition, the Terms, the Way, and Method, of our Salvation.

It cannot be ſuppoſed poſſible, for any Sinner, who, as ſuch, has forfeited the Divine Favour, and incurred his Diſpleaſure, to be ſaved againſt the Will of God; that is, to partake of his Favour, whether he will, or no: or that any Man can be ſaved, in any other Way, than that which God himſelf hath propoſed to us; for this would be, either, to ſuppoſe ourſelves, who are but fooliſh, and weak Creatures, to be ſtronger than almighty Power, and wiſer than infinite Underſtanding,

which

which is the groſſeſt Abſurdity, and Blaſphemy: or elſe it ſuppoſeth, that God, in the ſtrongeſt Terms, demandeth ſomething of us, in order to our enjoying of his Favour, which, yet, we may well enough hope for without it, yea, though we ſhould act the moſt directly contrary to his Demands upon us; than which, what could render him more trifling, and his demands more contemptible!

Let us, then, ſeriouſly attend to what the infinitely great, and wiſe, and good, God doth moſt plainly, and poſitively, demand of us, in his holy Word. And,

1. More generally. How plainly, and peremptorily, is Repentance inſiſted upon, in the holy Writings, in order to the Sinner's Salvation? This was the Doctrine, and Duty, which the Forerunner of our Lord inculcated upon his Hearers, ſaying, Matth. iii. 2. *Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand:* and again, ℣. 8. *Bring forth Fruit meet for Repentance*; and yet again, ℣. 11. *I indeed baptiſe you, with Water, unto Repentance.*

And this was what our bleſſed Lord, himſelf, inſiſted upon, when he entred upon his publick Miniſtry, after his Baptiſm, by *John*, as we read in the Evangeliſt *Matthew*, Matth. iv. 17. *From that Time, Jeſus began to preach, and to ſay, Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand.* This alſo our Lord gave in Commiſſion to his *Apoſtles*, and Miniſters after them, Luk. xxiv. 47. *That Repentance, and Remiſſion of Sins ſhould be preached, in his Name, among all Nations.*

And accordingly, we find the *Apoſtles* of our Lord, wherever they went, preaching Repentance, to their Hearers. So at *Lycaonia*, ſaid the Apoſtle *Paul*, Acts xiv. 15. *We preach unto you, that ye ſhould turn from theſe Vanities, unto the living God, which made Heaven, and Earth.* And when he ſaw the Superſtition, and Idolatry, of the *Athenians*, ſaid he,

he, Acts xvii. 30. *The Times of this Ignorance God winked at*; that is, he ſuffered all Nations to walk in their own Ways, according to the vain Imaginations of their own Hearts, without giving them any immediate Direction from Heaven; *but now commandeth all Men, every where, to repent*; that is, *now*, that the Goſpel is preached unto the World, and God, therein, hath made a Revelation of his Mind and Will, to Mankind, *He commandeth all Men, every where*, without Exception, *to repent*. This is the plain, and poſitive Command of God, and that to every individual Perſon, wherever the Goſpel cometh, let the Condition of Men, in the World, be what it will, to repent, and turn from all their Tranſgreſſions, and lead a holy, and vertuous Life. The outward Condition, and Circumſtances, of Men, upon worldly Accounts, will have no Influence to their future Salvation; and they will be never the nearer to Heaven for their being raiſed above their Fellow-Men, in Riches, and Honour; but the greateſt Men upon Earth, as well as the ſmalleſt, if they would have any Part in the Salvation of God, hereafter, muſt be careful, now, to glorify him, by forſaking their Sins, and yielding a ſincere Obedience to the Authority of the living God, who hath made them, and raiſed them, and to whom all Mankind muſt be accountable. The Apoſtle *Peter* alſo, preached the ſame Doctrine to the *Jews*, as *Paul* did to the *Gentiles*, ſaying to them, Acts iii. 19. *Repent ye, and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out, when the Times of refreſhing ſhall come from the Preſence of the Lord.* By which Manner of Expreſſion, he lets them know, that they could not, reaſonably, entertain any Hope of the Forgivneſs of their Sins, nor conſequently of the Favour of God, the Salvation of their Souls, and the Joys of Heaven, without Repentance.

Thus

Thus alſo, the Divine Revelation informs us, that this was one great End of the Incarnation of the only begotten Son of God, and therefore was *the Word made Fleſh*, that he might ſeek, and ſave, them that were in a loſt, undone, periſhing Condition, by calling them to Repentance: hence ſaid our Lord, Matth. ix. 13. *I am not come to call the Righteous, but Sinners, to Repentance.* Therefore alſo hath the incarnate Son of God laid down his Life, to mortify Sin in us, as well as to procure a Pardon for us; that, by his Death upon the Croſs, we might be enabled to crucify the Fleſh, with it's Affections, and Luſts; that is, that Sinners might become true Penitents. Hence we are told, Tit. ii. 14. *He gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify, unto himſelf, a peculiar People, zealous of good Works.* And therefore alſo hath our bleſſed Lord riſen from the Dead, not only that he might juſtify us, but that he might give us the Victory over our Sins, and deliver us from the Power of them. Hence we read, Acts v. 31. *Him hath God exalted with his Right Hand, to be a Prince, and a Saviour, for to give Repentance to Iſrael, and Remiſſion of Sins.*

And not only did Chriſt, while on Earth, preach Repentance to Sinners, but he aſſured the World, that there was no Poſſibility of any Man's obtaining Salvation, without it; and therefore he ſaid unto the *Jews*, who told him of the *Galileans*, whom *Pilate* ſlew, and of thoſe that were deſtroyed by the Fall of the Tower of *Siloe*, Luk. xiii. 3, 5. *Except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.* He did not mean, that they ſhould periſh in the ſame Manner, but as certainly periſh, and miſs of the Divine Favour, and the Happineſs of the heavenly World. So abſolutely does our *Saviour* inſiſt upon our complying with the Call, and Invitation, which he hath made, in his Word, to Sinners, that they

repent

repent of their Sins, and return to their Duty to God, and be obedient to all his Laws, that he aſſureth us, that, in the Proceſs of the great Day, when he ſhall appear as the Judge of the World, whoever is then found to have lived, and died, in any Courſe of Wickedneſs, whatever be their Profeſſion, and Pretentions, he will utterly reject them, and exclude them from Heaven, and Happineſs, forever. Matth. vii. 21, 22, 23. *Not every one that ſaith unto me, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven: many will ſay unto me, in that Day, Lord, Lord, have we not propheſied in thy Name? and in thy Name, done many wonderful Works? and in thy Name, have caſt out Devils? and then will I profeſs unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work Iniquity.* And farther, he plainly telleth us, Matth. xiii. 41, 42. That, *at the End of the World, the Son of Man ſhall ſend forth his Angels, and they ſhall gather, out of his Kingdom, all Things that offend, and them which do Iniquity, and ſhall caſt them into a Furnace of Fire; there ſhall be wailing, and gnaſhing of Teeth.* The Certainty of which Doom, upon impenitent Sinners, he confirmeth, by repeating it, in the Parable of the good, and bad Fiſhes, encloſed in the ſame Net, till a Separation is made, and then the good are gathered into Veſſels, and the bad are caſt away, as refuſe, and vile; ℣. 49, 50. *So ſhall it be, at the End of the World; the Angels ſhall come forth, and ſever the wicked from among the juſt, and ſhall caſt them into the Furnace of Fire; there ſhall be wailing, and gnaſhing of Teeth.* So that, upon a general View of the Goſpel Revelation, we have a moſt full, and plain Evidence, that Repentance is abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation.

2. If we deſcend into Particulars, we ſhall ſee, that the ſacred Scriptures are moſt full, and plain, and poſitive, and peremptory, in their Demand of

of Repentance, and that ſincere, and unfeigned, from every Sinner, as abſolutely neceſſary to his Salvation. Thus, if we take a View of the two eſſential Parts of Repentance, namely, the Sinner's forſaking of his Sins, and his leading of an holy Life, in Obedience to the Commandments of God, this will appear manifeſt to us.

1. The holy Scriptures do moſt ſtrongly, and indiſpenſibly, inſiſt upon the Sinner's forſaking of his Sins, as abſolutely neceſſary to his being ſaved. Thus they poſitively demand of us, that our Hearts be turned from all Sin, and Wickedneſs; from the Love of Sin, to an Hatred of it. Jer. iv. 14. *O Jeruſalem, waſh thine Heart from Wickedneſs, that thou mayeſt be ſaved; how long ſhall thy vain Thoughts lodge within thee?* Pſal. xcvii. 10. *Ye that love the Lord, hate Evil.* Which Words are not barely directory, to them that have the Love of God prevailing in them, but they are of the Force of a poſitive Command, even upon all Men, to love God, and hate Evil, as ever they would be found among thoſe holy ones, that have the Tokens of Salvation upon them: for the Lord *preſerveth the Souls of his Saints*, not of thoſe that go on in their Treſpaſſes. The like peremptory Command we have in the Epiſtle to the *Romans*, Rom. xii. 9. *Abhor that which is Evil*; that is, we muſt have an inward, hearty, Deteſtation of every Thing that is vicious, and ſinful, as of that which, of all Things, is moſt offenſive, and loathſome to us. Therefore alſo we are told, Rom. ii. 29. *Circumciſion is that of the Heart*; that is, the cutting off, and putting away, the Superfluity of Naughtineſs, which is in the Heart. Thus, we are commanded, *to deny Ungodlineſs, and worldly Luſts*; Tit. ii. 12. that is, the very Luſtings of the Heart after the Ways of Ungodlineſs, and after worldly, carnal, ſenſual Pleaſures, muſt be ſuppreſſed, and mortified. And ſo we read, 2 Cor. vii. 1. *Having therefore theſe Promiſes*;

Promiſes; that is, if we hope for any Benefit by the great, and precious Promiſes of God, if we would entertain any well grounded Hope, that God will be a Father to us, and own us for his Sons, and Daughters, and ſo would hope to be ſaved, we muſt *cleanſe ourſelves from all Filthineſs, of Fleſh, and Spirit*; that is, the inward Filth of the Heart, and the outward Filth of the Hands, muſt be purged from us. Thus alſo, we read, Gal. v. 24. *They that are Chriſt's*, thoſe that truly belong to him, are his real Diſciples, and are intereſted in the Benefits of his Death, and ſo ſhall be ſaved by him, *have crucified the Fleſh, with the Affections, and Luſts*; that is, the fleſhly carnal Luſts, and vicious Affections of the Heart, muſt be crucified, ſlain, and put to Death, or we cannot be ſaved by Chriſt.

As the Heart muſt be purified from the Love of Sin, ſo, as we have Opportunity, we muſt ſhew, in our Lives, and Converſation, our Abhorrence of every wicked Thing, by our careful Endeavours to keep ourſelves pure, and unſpotted from the World. The ſacred Scripture therefore demands it of us, 2 Tim. ii. 19. *Let every one, that nameth the Name of Chriſt, depart from Iniquity:* 1 Theſſ. v. 22. *Abſtain from all Appearance of Evil; have no Fellowſhip with the unfruitful Works of Darkneſs, but rather reprove them.* Eph. v. 11. Thus it is poſitively injoined upon us, Col. iii. 5. *Mortify your Members, which are upon the Earth*, that is, reſiſt, ſuppreſs, abſtain from all Acts of Sin, as *Fornication, Uncleanneſs, Inordinate Affection, evil Concupiſcence, and Covetouſneſs*; and the Reaſon is given in the following Words, *for which Things Sake the Wrath of God cometh upon the Children of Diſobedience.* q. d. By ſuch ſinful Practices, you diſobey the Commandment of God, and expoſe yourſelves to his Wrath, which will certainly overtake you, if you repent not.

And

And that, therefore, no Man may flatter, and delude himſelf, with a vain Imagination, that, notwithſtanding all theſe plain, and poſitive Injunctions, in the Word of God, yet, his forſaking of his Sins is not ſo abſolutely neceſſary, but that it may be poſſible for him to be ſaved, though he ſhould continue to go on in his wicked Courſes, I ſay, to prevent ſuch fatal Deluſions, the holy Scriptures do, in the plaineſt, and ſtrongeſt Terms, aſſure us to the Contrary, and that no Men can ever get to Heaven in their Sins. Hence ſaid the *Apoſtle*, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. *Be not deceived, neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Abuſers of themſelves with Mankind, nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners, ſhall inherit the Kingdom of God.* And ſo, in his Epiſtle to the *Galatians*, the *Apoſtle* reckoneth up the *Works of the Fleſh*, the various Sins which Men are generally addicted unto, as *Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanneſs, Laſciviouſneſs, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Emulation, Wrath, Strife, Sedition, Hereſies, Envyings, Murders, Drunkenneſs, Revelling, and ſuch like*; and ſaith he, upon them all, and in as plain Terms as Man can ſpeak, Gal. v. 21. *I declare unto you, as I have before ſaid,* (namely in his former preaching to them,) *that they, which do ſuch Things, ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God.* Yea, ſo far ſhall all ſuch, as live in any Way of Wickedneſs, be from getting ſafe to Heaven, that the Word of God letteth us know, for certain, that they ſhall periſh under the Wrath, and Curſe, of the Almighty, and that forever. Thus, Pſal. lxviii. 21. *God ſhall wound the Head of his Enemies, and the hairy Scalp of ſuch an one as goeth on ſtill in his Treſpaſſes.* Rom. viii. 13. *If ye live after the Fleſh, ye ſhall die.* And what can be plainer, and fuller, than that in the Epiſtle to the *Epheſians*? Ch. v. ℣. 6. *Let no Man deceive you, with vain Words; for becauſe of theſe Things,* (the

ſeveral

ſeveral Sins he had before mentioned,) *the Wrath of God cometh upon the Children of Diſobedience.*

And now, is it poſſible for us to hear theſe, (and innumerable more Texts, that might be mentioned, to the ſame Purpoſe,) and not ſee the abſolute Neceſſity there is, of the Sinner's forſaking of his Sins, in order to his obtaining Salvation? Is it poſſible for any Man to be ſaved in his Sins, or can he upon any good Grounds, entertain the Hope thereof, after all this plain Revelation of the poſitive Will of God to the contrary? Surely, it is not poſſible; and therefore the Sinner muſt repent of, and turn from, his Sins, or forever go without the Salvation, ſet before him in the Goſpel. Beſides,

2. The holy Scriptures do moſt peremptorily inſiſt upon the Sinner's leading a vertuous, and an holy Life, in Obedience to the Commands of God, as abſolutely neceſſary to his being ſaved. When our *Saviour* preached that excellent Sermon, commonly called, *the Sermon on the Mount*, wherein he explained, and unfolded, the moral Law; and exhorted his Diſciples to all Holineſs of Heart, and Life, and aſſured them that he *came, not to deſtroy the Law, or the Prophets, but to fulfil them*; that is, not to free Men from their Obligations to obey the Divine Will, contained in the Law, and the Prophets, but to enforce their Obedience thereto, and, that therefore, *till Heaven, and Earth, ſhould paſs away, one Jot, or one Tittle, ſhould in no wiſe paſs from the Law*; He concludes his Diſcourſe, by ſhewing them, how abſolutely their future, and eternal, Welfare was dependent upon their preſent Obedience. Matth. vii. 24---27. *Whoſoever* (ſaid he,) *heareth theſe Sayings of mine, and doth them,* (that is, who liveth in Obedience to the Will of God,) *I will liken him unto a wiſe Man, who built his Houſe upon a Rock; and the Rain deſcended, and the Floods came, and the Winds*

blew, and beat upon that Houſe, and it fell not; for it was founded upon a Rock. That is, his Hope of Salvation was well founded, ſo that no Storm, no Trial, ſhould be able to overthrow it, and diſappoint him. But, on the other Hand, *Every one that heareth theſe Sayings of mine, and doth them not,* (that is, he who, though he know the Will of God, doth not live in Obedience to his Precepts, but leadeth an irreligious, immoral, wicked, ſinful Life,) *ſhall be like unto a fooliſh Man, who built his Houſe upon the Sand; and the Rain deſcended, and the Floods came, and the Winds blew, and beat upon that Houſe, and it fell, and great was the Fall thereof.* That is, all his Hopes of Salvation were ill founded, and will not be able to endure the Trial, the thorow Search of the great Day, which is haſtening, but will certainly diſappoint him, and leave him in a moſt ruinous, and miſerable Condition. Nothing can be more plain than, that the Deſign of this Parable is, to teach us, the abſolute Neceſſity of our being truly vertuous, and religious, that we make it our conſtant Care to obſerve the Divine Commandments as the Rule of our Lives, and endeavour to govern all our Actions by it, and that we be holy unto the Lord, as ever we hope to be ſaved.

Thus alſo, our *Saviour* informeth us, who they are, whom God, *his Father*, *loveth*, and conſequently, who ſhall be accepted of him to the Joys of Heaven, even *he that hath my Commandments, and keepeth them*: Joh. xiv. 21. And he acquainteth us, in plain Terms, who they are, that ſhall *have eternal Life*, namely, *his Sheep, who hear his Voice, and follow him.* Joh. x. 27. That is, thoſe who live up to his Inſtructions, and follow his Example, or, in ſhort, the obedient *Chriſtian.* And farther, our bleſſed Lord lets us know, that it is an univerſal Obedience that is required of us, and that nothing ſhort of this, or our ſincere En-

deavours

deavours after it, will be ſufficient to denominate us real *Chriſtians*, and entitle us to his Favour. *Ye are my Friends*, (ſaid he,) *if ye do whatſoever I command you.* Joh. xv. 14. Then, and not elſe, are ye my Friends, if ye are univerſally obedient; theſe are the Terms, by which you will manifeſt your Friendſhip to me, and upon which I will be your Friend, and admit you to partake of the Benefits of my Friendſhip; viz. *if ye do whatſoever I command you.* Hence Chriſt ſaid to the young Man, who enquired of him, *what good Thing ſhall I do, that I may have eternal Life?* Matth. xix. 17. If thou wilt *enter into Life, keep the Commandments.* As if he had ſaid, This you ought to do, to be ſaved, keep the Commandments of God; you cannot poſſibly enter into Life, and be ſaved, without this.

The ſame Doctrine of Obedience, the *Apoſtles* of our Lord, every where, inſiſted upon; aſſuring of us, that, Gal. vi. 15. *In Chriſt, neither Circumciſion, nor Uncircumciſion, availeth any Thing, but a new Creature.* That is, no Names, Forms, Modes, and Profeſſion, of Religion, will give any Man a Right, and Title, to the Benefits of Chriſt's Incarnation, and Death, without his being a new Creature; or without ſuch an inward Change in his Heart, and outward one in his Life, as carrieth in it an univerſal, (though not altogether perfect,) Obedience to the Will of God, made known to him. So the *Apoſtle*, in his Epiſtle to the *Romans*, informeth us, Rom. ii. 6, 7. That God *will render unto every Man, according to his Deeds; to them, who, by patient Continuance in the Way of Well-doing, ſeek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality, Eternal Life.* And that we may know for certain, that only thoſe, who continue in the Way of Well-doing, ſhall finally enjoy eternal Life, while the Diſobedient ſhall miſs of Happineſs, and have a miſerable Portion aſſigned to them, he

goeth on to ſay, ℣. 8, 9. *But unto them who are contentious, and do not obey the Truth, but obey Unrighteouſneſs; Indignation, and Wrath, Tribulation, and Anguiſh, upon every Soul of Man that doth Evil, of the Jew firſt, and alſo of the Gentile.* So that none ſhall be ſaved, whether they be *Jew*, or *Gentile*, whether the Followers of *Moſes*, or Jeſus, but ſuch as are careful to live in Obedience to the Will of God; theſe, and theſe only, ſhall enter into Life: whereas all ſuch as do wickedly, whoſe Lives are a Contradiction to the Law of God, and Contempt of his rightful Authority, ſhall feel his righteous Diſpleaſure, and melt away.

Wherever the *Apoſtles* of our Lord went, they conſtantly preached Religion, and Righteouſneſs, and called upon Men to practiſe the great Duties of Piety, and Goodneſs, of Temperance, and Meekneſs, of Juſtice, and Mercy, of Brotherly-kindneſs, and Charity; Eph. iv. 32. *That ye be kind one to another, tender Hearted, forgiving one an other, even as God, for Chriſt's Sake, hath forgiven you.* Thus, Tit. ii. 11---13. *The Grace of God, which bringeth Salvation, hath appeared unto all Men, teaching us, that, denying Ungodlineſs, and worldly Luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, in this preſent World; looking for the bleſſed Hope, and glorious Appearing of the great God, and our Saviour, Jeſus Chriſt.* Thus, they require it of us, 2. Cor. vii. 1. *To perfect Holineſs, in the Fear of God*; Tit. iii. 8. *To be careful to maintain good Works*; and in plain Words call upon us, Heb. xii. 14. *To follow Holineſs, without which no Man ſhall ſee the Lord.* And what can be clearer, and more determinate than thoſe Words of Chriſt? Luk. xii. 47. *That Servant, which knew his Lord's Will, and prepared not himſelf, neither did according to his Will, ſhall be beaten with many Stripes:* and thoſe of the *Baptiſt*, Matth. iii. 10. *Every Tree which bringeth not forth good Fruit, ſhall be hewn down, and caſt into the Fire.*

From

From theſe, and many other Paſſages of the holy Scriptures, it is very evident, beyond all Contradiction, and without Room to doubt, or heſitate about it, that a holy, vertuous, religious Life, a Life conformable to the Divine Law, as the only ſure Rule of our Walk, is abſolutely neceſſary to a Sinner's being ſaved. And thus we ſee, from the whole Tenor of thoſe holy Writings, both in General, and Particular, what it is that God indiſpenſibly requireth of us, viz. that we forſake all our Sins, and lead holy Lives; and this ſheweth us the abſolute Neceſſity of Repentance, in all the main Parts of it, in order to a Sinner's being ſaved. And now,

2. Let us attend to the Voice of natural Reaſon, and Conſcience, and this will plainly inform us, that it is abſolutely, indiſpenſibly, neceſſary to the Sinner's being ſaved, that he become a true Penitent. I do not ſay, that natural Reaſon is ſufficient, of itſelf, to inform us, that the Sinner might be ſaved, upon his Repentance; becauſe I do not know whether it would have been able to have diſcovered any Thing about Repentance, either the true Nature of it, or that Repentance would, by any Means, have rendered the Sinner acceptable unto God: for I know of nothing, which our Reaſon, alone, can conceive of, in the Nature of God, that can infer the Neceſſity, or Readineſs, of the Divine Being to forgive a Criminal, upon his Sorrow for his paſt Offences, and his Care to be obedient for the future. This I am ſure of, that our natural Reaſon would never have told us, what we now know to be the Divine Will, concerning ſinful Man; it never would have diſcovered to us the Counſels of Peace, which the Goſpel, alone, hath revealed to us, of God's accepting the penitent Sinner, to Mercy with him, through the Merits of his incarnate Son. But, this I ſay, that our own Reaſon, ſince we have

the Advantages of Revelation, can now moſt clearly ſee, that there is no Poſſibility of Salvation for any ſinful Man, without Repentance. This will ſufficiently appear from two Conſiderations, viz. The Purity of the Divine Nature, and the Nature of Salvation. Thus

1. Our own Reaſon aſſureth us, upon a due Conſideration of the Holineſs, and Purity of the Divine Nature, that the Repentance of the Sinner is abſolutely neceſſary to his Salvation. Natural Reaſon might, probably, diſcover ſomething of the Purity of the Divine Nature, and ſince it hath pleaſed God to give a more full Diſcovery, by Revelation, what an infinitely holy God he is, our natural Reaſon, and Conſcience, readily ſubſcribeth to the Scripture Account of the Divine Being, which the Prophet *Habakkuk* giveth us, in theſe Words, Hab. i. 13. *Thou art of purer Eyes than to behold evil, and canſt not look on Iniquity*; and which the *Pſalmiſt* ſetteth before us, when he ſays, Pſal. v. 4, 5. *Thou art not a God that haſt Pleaſure in Wickedneſs, neither ſhall Evil dwell with thee; the fooliſh,* (the wicked,) *ſhall not ſtand in thy Sight; Thou hateſt all the Workers of Iniquity.* We are now ſure, that God is as Holy, as he is Great; that he is at an infinite Remove from all Sin; that he is ſo far from being tainted with the leaſt poſſible Degree of moral Evil, that he hateth it with a moſt perfect Hatred, whereſoever it is found, and cannot look upon it, but with utmoſt Deteſtation, and Abhorrence.

From whence it plainly followeth, that, ſuppoſing the Divine Majeſty to be, as he truly is, infinitely good, and to be ever ſo ready, and diſpoſed, from the Goodneſs of his Nature, to ſhew Kindneſs to his rational Creatures, who have tranſgreſſed his Law, and rendered themſelves obnoxious to his righteous Diſpleaſure, I ſay, ſuppoſing all this, yet, there is an utter Impoſſibility, from the

the Purity of his Nature, that he ſhould ever receive a guilty, polluted, Sinner into his Favour, and ſo ſave him, while he remaineth under the Power, and Dominion of Sin, and continueth to walk in a Courſe of Diſobedience to the Divine Authority, and Law. Were God ever ſo really, and ſtrongly, enclined to pardon the Sinner's Guilt, without any Conſiderations, but that of his own merciful Nature, yet, I humbly conceive, his Juſtice would put in an effectual Bar againſt ſuch a Procedure; and until the Demands of Juſtice, upon the Criminal, are fully anſwered, the Door is ſhut upon Mercy, and there is no Way for it to reach to the Offender. So that the Sinner's Guilt, or the Obligations he lies under to ſuffer, ſeemeth to forbid the Purity of the Divine Nature, which is equally concerned for Juſtice, and the Rights of the Sovereign, as for Mercy to the miſerable, from receiving a guilty Creature into Favour, until he is ſome Way or other purged from his Sin. But then, the Pollution, and Defilement of Sin, is ſuch, that they evidently ſtand in direct Oppoſition to the Purity of the Divine Nature; and therefore, until the Sinner be cleanſed from theſe, there is an utter Impoſſibility for an infinitely holy God to look upon him, with an Eye of Favour, and hold any Communion with him. Becauſe this would be to blend Holineſs, and Sin, the two greateſt Contraries, together; which is more impoſſible than to incorporate Light, and Darkneſs. It is a Contradiction to the natural Notions we have of the Sovereignty, and Dominion, of God, of his Equity, and Juſtice, as well as of his Holineſs, and Purity, to imagine, that he will, or can, reward, with the Tokens of his Favour, the wilfully diſobedient, impenitent, Sinner. Becauſe this would be to make the infinitely holy, and pure God, to become the Author, or, at leaſt, the Encourager, and Abetter,

of all Sin, and Wickedneſs; which would entirely overthrow his Dominion, and make void his Law, and be the moſt vile Proſtitution of Juſtice, in clearing the Guilty: all of which are moſt contrary, and Abhorrent, to the Divine Nature, and Perfections.

Nay, farther; Let us take into our Conſideration the clear Revelation of the abundant Grace of the Goſpel, that God hath ſent his dearly beloved Son into the World, for this very Purpoſe, to die for Sinners, that they, through him, might be ſaved; yet will not this Grace, in the leaſt, take off from the Force of the Obligation, and Neceſſity, the Sinner lies under to repent of his Sins, and lead a Life of Obedience, in order to his being ſaved. For, if it could be ſuppoſed, that the holy God, for the Sake of the Death of his Son, would pardon the impenitent Sinner, and ſave them that go on in their Treſpaſſes, what would this amount to? but, that the infinitely holy, and wiſe God would have been at the extraordinary Coſt, and Pains, to ſend an extraordinary Perſon into the World, the deareſt Object of his everlaſting Love, of the moſt exemplary Holineſs, to give us the moſt excellent, and holy Doctrines, and Precepts, and, at length, to lay down his very Life, and ſhed his moſt precious Blood, as an Offering, and Sacrifice, for Sin; and all to give the greateſt Encouragement to Mankind, to perſiſt in their Rebellions againſt the God that made them, and take the moſt effectual Method, to baniſh Vertue, and Holineſs, and Obedience to the Divine Law, out of the World, and to turn this Earth into a very Hell of Wickedneſs! And can any Deſign be more contradictory to itſelf, than this would be? Or could any Sett of Thoughts carry in it a more horrid, and blaſphemous, Imputation upon the Divine Nature, Counſels, and Adminiſtrations, than this would do? If the Sinner

ner is to be ſaved in his Sins, where, I beſeech you, then, is the Holineſs of God? Or what Occaſion was there for the Incarnation, and Death, of the Son of God? Or, where is the Wiſdom of God in this whole Deſign? And why might not ſinning Angels come in for a Share in this Grace, and Favour of God, (if it may be called ſo,) as well as ſinning Man, although they remain ſtill but very Devils?

So that Reaſon, and Conſcience, in any Meaſure attended to, do moſt fully aſſure us, from the Conſideration of the Holineſs, and Purity, of the Divine Nature, that the Repentance of the Sinner is abſolutely neceſſary to his Salvation. Let theſe Things be, and abide with you.

SERMON

SERMON XVI.

ACTS XVI. 30.

And ſaid, Sirs, What muſt I do to be ſaved?

I Endeavoured, in the Morning, to ſhew you the abſolute Neceſſity of Repentance, from the expreſs Language of the ſacred Scriptures, both in general Terms, and with regard to the particular Branches of this Duty; and the Voice of Reaſon demandeth this at our Hands, if we conſider the Purity of the Divine Nature. I proceed to argue,

2. If we conſider the Nature of Salvation, our own Reaſon will aſſure us, there can be no Poſſibility of a Sinner's enjoying of it, without Repentance, preparing of him for it. I have, in the Beginning of theſe Diſcourſes, ſufficiently ſhewed, that Men will exiſt in another State, and World, when they depart from hence; and I only now take it for granted, that as the Man leaveth this World, ſo he will be in the next; as the Tree falleth ſo it will lie; there will be no altering of the Temper, and Diſpoſition,

Diſpoſition, of the Man, from ſinful, and vicious, to vertuous, and holy, after the State of Probation is ended with him; but the Man will remain forever, in that World he paſſeth into, either a good, and vertuous, or a bad, and wicked Man, as he was at the Time when he left this World; ſaving only, that his vertuous, or vicious, Diſpoſition will advance to greater Degrees, in it's Kind, and a more fixed, and unalterable, Temper of Mind. If, indeed, the Man ſhould alter from bad, to good, after he leaveth this World, it is plain, he would then become a true Penitent. But I ſuppoſe him to remain in his Impenitency; and if he does ſo, then our Reaſon telleth us, that, upon this Suppoſition, he cannot poſſibly be ſaved.

For, let us conſider wherein the Salvation of a Sinner conſiſteth, and ſee whether, he that remaineth in his Impenitency, can poſſibly enjoy it, while he continueth in that Condition.

I have, formerly, ſhewed you, that the Salvation of the Sinner conſiſteth, in Part, in a Deliverance from all that Evil, both of Sin, and Puniſhment, which the Soul of the Sinner is more ſpecially ſubject unto. But now, it is very evident, that the impenitent Sinner is not ſaved from the Evil of Sin, which is the worſt of Evils, and the procuring Cauſe of all other. For he is Impenitent; that is, he continueth in Sin, under the Power, and Dominion, of it: and how great an Evil ſoever Sin may be, in the Defilement, and Blemiſh, the Diſorder, and Confuſion, the mean Vaſſalage, and Slavery, brought upon the Soul by it, yet all of this remaineth upon the impenitent Sinner; *he that is unholy, will be unholy ſtill*: ſo that, in this Regard, he is not, nor can he be ſaved: unleſs, to be ſinful, and holy, regular, and irregular, a Slave, and free, mean the ſame Thing.

Nor can he poſſibly be ſaved from the Evil of Puniſhment,

Puniſhment, without Repentance. For, beſides that the Juſtice of God ſtandeth ready armed againſt the Sinner, while he remaineth in his Sins, and continues to act contrary to that which is holy, juſt, and good, yea, though there ſhould be no Degree of Miſery inflicted upon him, from the more immediate Hand of a terrible God, when he paſſes into the other World, yet, his own Conſcience will then fly in his Face, and, whether he will, or no, will be his continual Tormentor. When the Man ſhall be uncloathed of Fleſh, and Senſe, there will be none of thoſe Objects, which here give a Diverſion to the Mind, and hinder for the preſent, it's cloſe Reflections, to interrupt the Mind from taking a View of her own Conduct; and then the Conſcience of the Sinner, which is privy to all his Actions will be filled with dreadful Apprehenſions of the baſe, and mean part ſhe has acted, how much below, and unbecoming her rational Nature her Conduct has been, and what a State of Purity, and Peace, and Happineſs, ſhe has loſt by her own Folly; and the ſevere Reproaches of Conſcience, in the Proſpect hereof, will be a *Worm*, within the Breaſt of the Man, that *never dyeth*, a *Fire that never goeth out*, and will render him truly miſerable, and forever ſo. For he cannot get rid of himſelf, who then will become his own worſt Enemy.

I have alſo formerly ſhewed you, that to be ſaved is, to poſſeſs all that poſitive Good which the Soul ſtandeth in need of. And, without taking Notice of the preſent ſpiritual Good which the Soul wanteth, which is utterly inconſiſtent with a State of Impenitency, let us conſider the future Good it wanteth, in the coming World; (that is to ſay, the Happineſs of the heavenly World;) and it will plainly appear, from the Force of natural Reaſon, that the Sinner cannot poſſibly be ſaved, without altering his Temper and becoming a real Penitent. For

For, the inward Principle of Rebellion, and Hatred of God, and Goodneſs, which ſways the Soul of the Impenitent, in all his Acts of Sin, utterly incapacitates him to partake of the Bleſſedneſs of the heavenly State, if there were no Law of God to forbid it to him. The Society, the Enjoyments, the Employments, of that pure, and happy World, in which the ſubſtantial Felicity of Heaven conſiſteth, would, of all Things, be the greateſt Averſion of the polluted unholy Soul; becauſe, what, of all Things, he is moſt unlike to, and at the greateſt moral Diſtance from. So that, if it were poſſible, for the Beatifick Viſion to open, in it's full Luſtre, before him, and for the impure Soul, to be encircled with all the Glories which flow from thence, it would be ſo far from rendering of him compleatly happy, that it would become his greateſt Torment, and give him the higheſt Uneaſineſs; becauſe, it would be a confining of him to what is moſt contrary to his very Nature, and prevailing Inclination, and therefore would be a greater Burden to him, than for a living Man to be chained to a dead Carcaſe. The impenitent Sinner could not poſſibly attend the holy, and pure, Services of Heaven, but would fly from them, as having no Principle of Holineſs in him to render them entertaining to him: nor could he participate in the Enjoyments of Heaven, becauſe there could be no Agreement between Perſons, and Things, whoſe Natures are ſo directly oppoſite. So that the Enjoyment of God, and Heaven, were the Thing poſſible, would be no Happineſs to the Sinner; and it is utterly impoſſible he ſhould enjoy them, from the Inconſiſtency of his impure Nature, with the holy Nature of the Divine Being, and the Retinue of his Court; which rendereth it abſolutely impoſſible that any Sinner ſhould be ſaved, without Repentance.

Thus we ſee, both, from the ſacred Scriptures,

tures, the declared Will, and Law of the great God, and, from the Reaſon, and Nature of Things, the pure, and holy, Nature of God, and the Eſſence, and Conſtitution, of that Salvation which is propoſed to us, the abſolute Neceſſity there is, that the periſhing Sinner ſhould repent of, and forſake, his Sins, and lead a new, and holy Life, in Obedience to the Commands of God, in order to his being ſaved. Hence it is, that Repentance is called, Acts xi. 18. *Repentance unto Life*; and, 2 Cor. vii. 10. *Repentance unto Salvation*; becauſe it is the Means leading to them, and there can be no Life, and Salvation, for a poor Sinner, without it. Having thus made good the *ſecond* Head, I now proceed to the *third* Thing propoſed, viz.

III. To conſider what the periſhing Sinner muſt do to obtain this Repentance unto Salvation. We have ſeen what Repentance is, and the abſolute Neceſſity of it; but, in very Deed, can the poor, languiſhing, dying Sinner, thus repent of his Sins, of himſelf, that he is ſo often called upon to repent? Can he hate, and forſake, the Sins, which are ſo delightſome to him; and love, and practiſe, the Holineſs, which he is ſo averſe to; and this, by his own Strength, the Force of his Free Will, and the Power which now belongeth to him, as ſuch a Creature as he is? No; verily, I have ſhewed, under a former Head, that, as the Sinner has nothing of Merit to deſerve Salvation, ſo neither has he ſufficient Strength, of his own, to work out his Salvation; and therefore he is not able, of himſelf, to become a true Penitent.

But then is the Sinner a mere Machine, and wrought upon only by external Force, and Violence? No, ſurely; he is a rational Agent, and God dealeth with him as ſuch; and therefore there are ſome Things he muſt do, to obtain Repentance unto Salvation. For, though God can, if

if he pleaſe, ſuddenly change the Heart of a Sinner, without his being at the Trouble to do any one Thing, to bring forward ſo great, and good, a Work; yet, according to the Goſpel Diſpenſation, where the ordinary Means of Grace are enjoyed, it pleaſeth the Divine Majeſty to accompliſh his Deſigns of Mercy, in this Way, of the Sinner's diligent Improvement of thoſe Means, which he hath appointed for the deſigned End. Though God hath not bound himſelf to the Uſe of Means, but can work without them, when he pleaſeth, yet he has tied us to the Uſe of Means, nor can we expect Succeſs in any of our Concerns without it. Since God has been pleaſed to appoint, and direct to, Means, to bring the Sinner to Repentance, if, therefore, he will but ſeriouſly, and diligently, attend upon thoſe Means, he may comfortably hope for the Divine Bleſſing, to accompany his Endeavours, and render them effectual to bring him to a thorow Repentance, and finally to Salvation. Accordingly, I ſhall briefly name ſome Things, which every Sinner can do, and which he muſt do, as ever he would hope to be ſaved.

1. He muſt ſeriouſly weigh, in his own Mind, and deeply affect himſelf with the Senſe of, the evil Nature of Sin, and his own Sinfulneſs. To find out the Diſeaſe is half the Cure. To be truly ſenſible of the Evil of Sin, and our own Sinfulneſs, will go a great Way to promote our Repentance. For it cannot be, but that a rational Agent will be at ſome Pains to ſhun, what is hurtful to him, when he has the certain, and preſent, Knowledge of it. Now, this lieth within the Sinner's Reach; his rational Nature capacitates him to take a View of Sin, both in the Nature, and in the Effects of it, that by a certain, and preſent, Perception, what an Evil Sin is in itſelf, and how hurtful unto him, he may be excited to fly from, and avoid it.

But,

But, alaſs! the great Unhappineſs is, that, for want of thinking, the Sinner does not diſcern the Evil of Sin, nor ſee the Detriment which it doth to him; he feeleth himſelf ſome Way gratified by it, and, from thence, draws up too haſty a Concluſion, that it is good for him, and therefore makes light of all Cautions, and Warnings, againſt it; and he fancies it would be a greater Evil to him, to deny himſelf of any of the preſent Gratifications of Senſe, than to give Way to them.

If therefore the Sinner would come to Repentance, that he may be ſaved, he muſt be at ſome Pains, more thorowly to examine the Nature of Sin, and weigh in his own Mind, what a vile, baſe, and diſingenuous, Thing it is, how contrary unto all Right, and Equity, and repugnant to our own Reaſon; that every Sin, more directly againſt God, is not only Diſobedience to our rightful Sovereign, but baſe Ingratitude to our beſt Friend, to whom we are beholden for our very Being, and all the Comforts of it; that every Sin, more immediately againſt our Neighbour, is not only a violating the Law of God, but an abuſeful Injury done to our Fellow-Creature, and a not doing to others, as we would they ſhould do unto us.

And the Sinner muſt weigh in his Mind, what will be the Iſſue, the Fruit, and Rewards, of his Sins, if perſiſted in; even nothing ſhort of Death, and Damnation, and that forever; to inherit devouring Fire, to dwell with everlaſting Burnings, to lie down in Fire and Brimſtone, in Hell, throughout eternal Ages. A moſt dreadful Iſſue indeed!

He muſt alſo ſeriouſly bethink himſelf, what a great Sinner he has been, in how many Things he has offended, in Thought, in Word, and in Deed, from his Youth up; and how aggravated his Tranſgreſſions have been; and what a Monſter of Wickedneſs, and Ingratitude, what a Child of the

the Devil, and Spawn of Hell, his Sins have rendered him.

And it is not enough that he ſome Times caſteth an Eye upon theſe Things, and vieweth them as at a Diſtance, which maketh no Impreſſion upon him, but he muſt bring theſe Thoughts home, and cloſe, to himſelf, and deeply affect himſelf with them, and endeavour to keep them preſent with him, that he may ſee, and feel, what an Offence Sin is unto God, and how dreadfully injurious it is unto himſelf; that, being thorowly apprehenſive of the exceeding Sinfulneſs of Sin, his Heart may be pricked within him, and he may be ſenſible of the diſmal Smart, and Pain of it; and thus may be grieved for his paſt Sins, and be excited to a prudent Care to ſhun all Sin, for the Time to come. Thus ſaith the *Prophet*, Jer. ii. 19. *Thy own Wickedneſs ſhall correct thee, and thy Backſlidings ſhall reprove thee; know, therefore, and ſee, that it is an evil Thing, and bitter, that thou haſt forſaken the Lord, thy God, and that my Fear is not in thee, ſaith the Lord God of Hoſt.*

2. The Sinner muſt fixedly reſolve againſt all Sin, and to lead a Life of holy Obedience, for the Time to come. Fixed Reſolutions will enable a Man to overcome many Difficulties, which he was ready, at the firſt View of them, to look upon as inſuperable: this carries the hardy Soldier through the Toils of the War, and helpeth him to maſter the Hardſhips, and overcome the Dangers, he is called to encounter with. And ſo will it aſſiſt the Sinner, in his Conflict with his Corruptions, and Luſts, and mightily enable him to beat down his ſpiritual Enemies; whereas the Want of this will render him, who has ſome Thoughts of altering his preſent ſinful Conduct, but an eaſy Prey to every Temptation.

And this alſo, in ſome Meaſure, lieth within the Sinner's Power. He is capable of reſolving,

againſt that which he ſees, and knoweth to be Evil, and hurtful to him, and to do that which he knoweth to be Good, and profitable, to him. For the Will of a rational Agent is ever determined by the preſent Diſcernment of the Underſtanding; that is, it chooſeth that which, all Circumſtances conſidered, it apprehendeth to be beſt, and refuſeth that which it ſeeth, or ſuppoſeth, to be worſt for the Man. And, therefore, when the Underſtanding, upon the preſent View of Things, hath judged ſuch, or ſuch a Thing to be bad, and really to our Hurt, and Damage, the Will reſolveth againſt that Thing; and tho' the preſent Reſolution of the Will may be ſuperceded, either by ſome Circumſtances afterward preſenting the ſame Object as Good, or, through ſome Prepoſſeſſion of the Affections, or, through Inadvertency, and want of calling to Mind the Evil which we formerly ſaw in the Thing reſolved againſt, (which is very much the Caſe of thoſe Sinners who break through their former Purpoſes,) yet, when the Underſtanding has taken a thorow View of Things, and has a clear Diſcernment of the Nature, and Conſequents, of them, and the Will has paſſed a fixed, and reſolute, Determination concerning them, it will not be eaſy to alter ſuch Reſolutions.

Thus the Sinner, from the plain Conviction which he has of the Evil of Sin, in the odious Nature, and terrible Conſequents, of it, muſt paſs it into the fixed, and ſetled, Determination of his Will, to have nothing more to do with the unfruitful Works of Darkneſs, but ſay, as *Elihu* expreſſed it, Job xxxiv. 31, 32. *Surely it is meet to be ſaid unto God,----I will not offend any more; if I have done Iniquity, I will do no more.* And, inaſmuch as a Man will not always have Opportunity to go thro' an exact Examination, and comparing of Things, in order to form a preſent Judgment, therefore it will be fitting for him, when, upon a more ſetled, and thorow, Search, he has truly diſcovered Sin

to be the worſt of Evils, to reſolve that he will have nothing more to do with it, upon any Conſideration whatſoever, and to make this fixed Reſolution the Rule of his Walk, and Actions, for the future. And, being convinced of the Beauty of Holineſs, the Wiſdom of Religion, and the Advantage of devoting himſelf, to the Service of God, he ſhould come to a fixed Reſolution with himſelf, to walk in all the Ordinances, and Commandments of the Lord blameleſs, and that whatever he ſhall diſcover to be the Divine Will concerning him, he will endeavour a ready, chearful, and exact, Obedience, and Submiſſion, thereto, as his preſent, and perpetual, Duty, and Intereſt; and ſay with the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. cxix. 106. *I have ſworn, and will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous Judgments.*

But then, let him remember to take up theſe Reſolutions, not merely in his own Strength, but in the Name of Chriſt, looking to, and depending upon, him, for Power to keep them; and immediately, without deferring it, put his Reſolutions into Practice.

3. The Sinner muſt watch, and ſtrive, againſt all Temptations to Sin, and to the Performance of his Duty. He that deſigneth to alter, and change, the Courſe of his Life, from vicious, to vertuous, muſt expect to meet with many Temptations, and Impediments; and his Reſolutions will be but of little ſignificancy to him, nor will he be able to make them good, unleſs he will be at ſome Pains with himſelf, to guard againſt whatever would be an Hindrance to him, and to improve whatever would tend to further him, in the Performance of them. Reſolutions are to no Purpoſe, unleſs they are reduced to Practice. And how ſhall he be able to practiſe, as he has reſolved, who neglecteth the Means to fulfil his Engagements? Surely, no Man will ſay, that the Sinner hath

not Power to be upon his Guard, againſt what he apprehendeth to be hurtful to him, or to exert himſelf, and improve the Advantages he may have, to the Performance of what he ſeeth to be good for him.

The Sinner, therefore, muſt watch over the corrupt Workings of his own Heart, that, if poſſible, he may ſpie out his Danger from that Quarter, and may ſtifle, and ſuppreſs, the firſt Motions, and Stirrings, of Sin, in him; and he muſt watch againſt the Snares, and Temptations, of a falſe, and deluding World, and againſt the Suggeſtions, of a buſy, and malicious Devil; that he may not be diverted from his Purpoſes, and be drawn into that which would be hurtful to him. Hence is that *Apoſtolical* Direction, 2 Pet. v. 8. *Be ſober, be vigilant, becauſe your Adverſary, the Devil, as a roaring Lyon, walketh about, ſeeking whom he may devour.*

And he muſt ſtrive, as well as watch, laying himſelf out, in the Improvement of his Reaſon, and the Motives the Word of God furniſheth him withal, to reſiſt the wicked one, and to maſter the various Temptations that aſſault him: he muſt *ſo fight, not as one that beateth the Air*, but endeavour, by all Means, *to keep under his Body, and bring it into Subjection*; 1 Cor. ix. 26, 27. And be careful not heedleſly, or wilfully, to give Way to Temptations; and, as much as may be, ſhun the Company, the Places, the Occaſions, by which he was, heretofore, and may be again, overcome, and drawn into Sin.

He muſt alſo watch, and ſtrive, for the Performance of his Duty; he muſt embrace the Opportunities, and improve the Seaſons, Occaſions, and Advantages, he may have, to attend upon the Duties of Religion, and to exerciſe Juſtice, and Charity. Hence is that of our *Saviour*, Matth. xi. 12. *From the Days of John the Baptiſt, until now, the*

the Kingdom of Heaven ſuffereth Violence; and the violent take it by Force. There muſt be a ſort of holy Violence uſed to take Heaven, a Violence upon ourſelves, in the maſtering of our fleſhly Appetites; and a Violence in reſiſting Temptations, that we may beat down all Oppoſition, in our Way thither; and a Violence in our Endeavours to run in the Race ſet before us, that we may obtain the Prize.

4. The Sinner muſt earneſtly pray to God to give him Repentance unto Salvation. The Sinner, 'tis true, cannot thorowly repent of himſelf, and change his own Heart, and Life; all his Conſideration, Reſolution, Watchfulneſs, and Strivings, alone, will not be ſufficient to make a real Penitent of him: but God is able, by his almighty Spirit, and Grace, to convert, and change him, and form him a new, in Chriſt Jeſus, unto good Works. Therefore Repentance is called the Gift of God; Act. xi. 18. *God granted unto the Gentiles Repentance unto Life:* 2 Tim. ii. 25. *God giveth Repentance to the Acknowledgment of the Truth.* And ſince Repentance is among the peculiar Works, and Gifts, of God, therefore the great Buſineſs of the Sinner is, humbly, and earneſtly, to ask this Gift of God. For certainly, this the Sinner can do; he has the Power of Reaſon, and Speech, and can put up a Prayer to God, as he can make a Petition to Man: and he that will not be at the Pains to ask this heavenly Gift, when his own Salvation is dependent upon it, will be left, deſervedly, to go without it, and ſo miſs of the Salvation of his Soul.

This, then, is what the Sinner has to do, to be in Earneſt, and importunate in Prayer to God, daily, to create in him a clean Heart, and renew a right Spirit within him; to cry, with the *Leper*, Matth. viii. 2. *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canſt, make me clean.* He muſt make it his fervent, and daily,

Prayer to the God of all Grace, that, by the Spirit, he may be enabled to mortify the Deeds of the Body; that the old Man may be crucified, and the Body of Sin may be deſtroyed, that he may not hence forth ſerve Sin; that he may be aſſiſted in his Conflict with all the Enemies of his Salvation, that, being ſtrengthened with Might in his inner Man, he may, finally, come off a Conqueror, and more than a Conqueror, through him that hath loved him. He muſt ſincerely, and daily, pray to God, to enlarge his Heart, that he may run in the Way of the Divine Commandments; to make his Heart ſound in the Statutes of God, that he may not be aſhamed; and effectually to turn him from Darkneſs, to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God.

To encourage the poor Sinner, in his daily, and important Requeſts, at the Throne of Grace, for Mercy, God has been pleaſed, moſt graciouſly, to condeſcend to our Weakneſs, and in his moſt tender Compaſſion to us, declared, that he is more ready to give his *Holy Spirit*, unto them that ask it, than any earthly Parent is to give the Neceſſaries of the preſent Life, which lie within his Power, to his beſeeching Children. For thus He hath aſſured us, Luk. xi. 13. *If ye, being evil, know how to give good Gifts unto your Children; how much more ſhall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit unto them that ask him.* In this Way, let every Sinner do his beſt to obtain Repentance unto Salvation, and I verily perſwade myſelf that none, who do ſo, ſhall miſs of the heavenly Gift.

I ſhall now make ſome Improvement of what has been ſaid, and ſo conclude this *Third* general Head under the Doctrine.

USE. 1. From what has been ſaid, we may clearly ſee the wonderful Grace, and Wiſdom, of God, diſplayed in this Method of the Sinner's Salvation

vation. What wonders of Grace open to us, when we conſider how ready, and willing, the Lord is, to receive a poor, vile, polluted, Creature to Mercy, through the Atoning Sacrifice of Jeſus Chriſt, upon his unfeigned Repentance? It is great Condeſcention, and Grace, in God, that he ſhould be willing to pardon, and ſave, a rebel Creature, upon any Terms, though they ſhould have been ever ſo hard, and difficult, for him to perform; but how aſtoniſhing is the Grace of our God, that he only ſaith to the Sinner, *Waſh, and be clean!* that he is ready to accept the Sinner into his Favour, upon his leaving off his Rebellions, and Endeavour to be hearty, and ſteady, in his Obedience, for the future!

And how apparently is the Divine Wiſdom manifeſted herein? That when God, in his tender Mercy, provided for the Salvation of a periſhing Sinner, he did it in ſuch a Way, as forever maintains the Rights of his Sovereignty, the Honour of his Law, and his moſt ſtrict Regards to Vertue, and Holineſs; and therefore has made it abſolutely neceſſary, that he, who would partake of his pardoning Mercy, ſhould repent, and forſake his Sins, and lead an holy Life, or he cannot be ſaved. Thus, Eph. ii. 4, 5, 7. and iii. 10. *God, who is rich is Mercy,---- even when we were dead in Sins, hath quickened us; ----that he might ſhew the exceeding Riches of his Grace,---- to the Intent,---- might be known, by the Church, the manifold Wiſdom of God.*

2. From hence we learn, how vain are all the Hopes of Salvation for any Sinner, unleſs he forſake his Sins, and lead an holy Life. We have ſeen, that Repentance is what God does, in the moſt plain, and full, and poſitive, Terms, require of Sinners, as abſolutely, and indiſpenſibly, neceſſary to Salvation; vain is it then for any Sinner to imagine that, poſſibly, he may be ſaved, and

get to Heaven, while he continueth in his Sins unrepented of. Be not deceived; if ever, O Sinner! thou wouldeſt entertain any good Hope of arriving ſafe at the happy Manſions above, when you leave this World, you muſt become a true Penitent. Can any Thing be plainer than this? Rev. xxi. 27. *There ſhall in no wiſe enter into it,* (into Heaven,) *any Thing that defileth, neither whatſoever worketh Abomination, or maketh a Lye.* And is there, then, the leaſt Room for any Man to hope to go to Heaven, with his Sins about him? The Word of God, and his own Temper, abſolutely forbid it.

It is not, O Sinner! becauſe thou makeſt a Profeſſion of the *Chriſtian* Religion; it is not becauſe thou attendeſt upon the external Duties of Religion; it is not becauſe thou enjoyeſt the outward Priviledges of the Diſciples of Jeſus; it is not becauſe many of thy Neighbours, and thy Miniſter, may think well of thee; that thou ſhall at laſt be ſaved: None of theſe Things will carry thee to Heaven. If thou doeſt not leave off thy Sins; if thou doeſt not forſake thy vicious Curſes, thy Profaneneſs, and Sabbath Breaking, thy Courſing, and Swearing, thy Intemperance, and Drunkenneſs, thy Unrighteouſneſs, Falſhood, and Lying, thy Lewdneſs, and Debauchery, thy Pride, and Avarice, thy ſinful Anger, Wrath, Malice, Revenge, and the like; if thou art not careful, and induſtrious, to obſerve all the Commandments of God, and doeſt not make Conſcience of walking before him in Holineſs, and Righteouſneſs, all the Days of thy Life; thou canſt never be ſaved. All thy Prayers, and Cries, and Tears, all thy Sorrow, and Mourning, yea, and all thy Faith, and Dependance, will do thee no real good, without an Alteration, and Change, of thy Heart, and Life, from the Love, and Practice of Sin, to the Love, and Practice of Holineſs.

Nay;

Nay; There is none on Earth, or in Heaven, that can ſave thee, without Repentance. For *the Hypocrite's Hope ſhall periſh.* Job. viii. 13.

3. Hence learn, how trifling all Excuſes are, for a Continuance in Sin, and Neglect of Duty. God does moſt poſitively inſiſt upon Repentance, the forſaking of all known Sin, and the Performance of every known Duty, as we have Opportunity, as the Condition, and Terms, upon which, for the Sake of the Merits of his dear Son, he will finally ſave the Sinner. How trifling is it then, for any to think to have themſelves excuſed, in the Commiſſion of this, and the other, Sin, becauſe of their natural Temper, and Inclination, or the Cuſtom of themſelves, and others, leading them into it? Oughteſt thou not, in Obedience to a poſitive Command of God, by a ſincere Repentance, to ſubdue, and mortify, thy own vicious Diſpoſition, and ſtem the Current of thy own evil Manners, and the ſinful Cuſtoms of the World around thee? How vain, and trifling, is it for thee to ſuppoſe, that thou ſhalt be excuſed in thy Neglect of one Duty, becauſe of thy careful Attendance upon an other? Or, that thy Tything of Mint, Aniſe, and Cummin, will atone for thy Neglect of the weightier Matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy and Faith? How frivolous will all thy Pleas be, for the Neglect of any known Duty, fetched, either from a vicious Modeſty, and falſe Shame, or from the Difficulty of denying thyſelf, and forgiving thine Enemies, and repairing the Injuries thou mayeſt have done unto others? What are all theſe Excuſes, and all that thou canſt make, when ſet in Competition with a poſitive Command of God? Yea, are theſe Excuſes any Ways fit to be laid in the Ballance, againſt the Salvation of thy own Soul? Or, wilt thou have the Face to plead them, think you, in the Day, when thou ſhalt appear before the tremendous

mendous Judgment Seat of Chriſt? Verily, then, thou wilt be *ſpeechleſs*, Matth. xxii. 12. 4.

4. Fourthly, and I have done; Let us all be perſwaded to come up to the Terms of Repentance, which we ſee ſo abſolutely neceſſary to our Salvation. We cannot poſſibly be ſaved without Repentance: and is not our own Salvation worth regarding, and ſtriving for? Is it not highly reaſonable, and fitting, that we ſhould be moſtly concerned, for that which is our main Intereſt, as well as great Duty? Doth not God, and Nature, tell us, we muſt forſake all our Sins, and be obedient, that it may go well with us forever? If we repent of our Sins, the merciful God will certainly, for the Sake of the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, forgive us all our Sins, and cleanſe us from all Unrighteouſneſs: He will ſave us from the Puniſhment of our Sins, and make us the Heirs of everlaſting Salvation.

I know, very well, that Repentance is an hard, and difficult Work; and that which maketh it to be ſo is, the corrupt Bias of our depraved Nature, and the Sinner's having a long while accuſtomed himſelf to do Evil. So great is the Difficulty of overcoming, vicious Habits, and Diſpoſitions, which become fixed by repeated Acts, and long Cuſtom, that the *Prophet* ſaid upon it, Jer. xiii. 23. *Can the Ethiopian change his Skin? or the Leopard his Spots? then may ye, that are accuſtomed to do Evil, learn to do well.* This, indeed, is a very good Reaſon, why they, who are yet in their Youth, ſhould betimes ſet themſelves to the great Work of Repentance, that it may be ſo much the eaſier for them to live vertuouſly; becauſe, as yet, a long addicting of themſelves to that which is Evil, has not ſo fixed the Habits of Vice, as to render it next to impoſſible for them to alter them.

But however, hard, and difficult, as it is, yet

Repentance

Repentance is abſolutely neceſſary; and the indiſpenſible Neceſſity of it, one would think, ſhould be ſufficient to put every Man upon Endeavours to ſurmount all Difficulties: for that which is abſolutely neceſſary, muſt be done, let the Difficulty be what it will. Through the Mercy of God, it is not Impoſſible to the greateſt, and the oldeſt, Sinner, now, at laſt, truly to repent of his evil Deeds, and turn unto the Lord his God. The greateſt Difficulty lieth in the firſt Attempt, in the firſt Beginnings of a vertuous Life. If Sinners would but apply themſelves, in good Earneſt, to this neceſſary Work, they would find, by the Grace of God, who is ever ready to aſſiſt the willing, that they might, by Degrees, conquer their moſt ſtubborn vicious Appetites, and Habits, and be brought to lead Lives of holy Obedience to the Divine Commandments. And when once they have made ſome good Entrance into the Way of Holineſs, it would then become more eaſy, pleaſant, and delightful, to them to walk therein; and their Path, like that of the Juſt, would ſhine more, and more, unto the perfect Day. Therefore our bleſſed Lord has aſſured us, Matth. xi. 30. *His Yoke is eaſy, and his Burden is light.* When once the Sinner has got the Maſtery over his Corruptions, though but a partial one, (which only is to be expected in this Life,) he would then have the Pleaſure of acting, as becometh a rational, and wiſe Agent, ſo as to preſerve his Innocency, and be victorious over what has been truly hurtful to him. It was an Obſervation of *Mon. St. Evremont*, * "There is "a ſecret Pleaſure in deteſting what has diſpleaſed "us. To be ſure this will hold good in true Repentance; and the Pleaſure of hating our Sins, which have done us the greateſt Injury, will greatly make Amends for all the Difficulty we have been put to in ſubduing of them.

* Vol. 3. P. 177.

Well

Well then; Let every Sinner be in good Earneſt in his Endeavours to put off the old Man, and put on the new Man, ſtriving for the Maſtery, that, if by any Means, he may avoid the Paths of Death, and lay hold on eternal Life. Conſider the preſent Shame, and Unprofitableneſs of Sin, and the future Iſſue of a wicked Life; look back upon your paſt Experiences, and look forward, to the End of Things, and ſay now, Rom. vi. 21. *What Fruit had ye, in thoſe Things, whereof ye are now aſhamed? for the End of theſe Things is Death.*

And think ſeriouſly, what it coſt the incarnate Son of God, to buy off the Puniſhment of Sin. View Sin in the Light of the Sufferings of Chriſt. What Poverty, and Meanneſs did he ſubmit to? What Shame, Reproach, and Contempt, was poured upon him? What Pains in his Body, and Anguiſh in his Mind, did he endure? What an horrid, and bloody, Death, did he undergo? How did he bear the Inſults of Men, the Rage of Devils, and the Hidings of his Father's Face? in the Day when God laid upon him the Iniquity of us all. *Look*, now, *upon Chriſt, whom your Sins have pierced, and mourn.* Zech. xii. 10. And eſpecially, when Chriſt is evidently ſet forth, before your Eyes, as crucified, at his holy Table, let it put you upon feeding upon this *Chriſtian Paſſover* with bitter Herbs. Let the Sight of the ſuffering Jeſus, at once, convince you of the infinite Evil of Sin, and fire you with the greateſt Indignation againſt it, and quicken your Endeavours to be the Death of that which has ſlain the Lord of Life, and Glory. 1 Pet. iv. 1, 2. *For as much as Chriſt hath ſuffered in the Fleſh, arm yourſelves with the ſame Mind: for he that hath ſuffered in the Fleſh hath ceaſed from Sin, that he no longer ſhould live, the reſt of his Time, to the Luſts of Men, but to the Will of God.*

And

And let none abuſe the Grace of God, in his Readineſs to receive the returning Sinner to Mercy, and encourage themſelves in Sin, for the preſent, upon Preſumption to repent ſome Time hereafter. What Name can be bad enough for ſuch vile Baſeneſs, and black Ingratitude, as ſo to turn the Grace of God into Wantonneſs? *Shall we continue in Sin, that Grace may abound? God forbid!* ſaid the *Apoſtle*, Rom. vi. 1, 2. with the greateſt Indignation, and Abhorrence. No; let us all, rather, take the Encouragement that is given us, and becauſe the God of *Iſrael* is a merciful God, ready to pardon Iniquity, Tranſgreſſion, and Sin, therefore now, immediately, without Delay, ſet ourſelves, in good Earneſt, about the great and neceſſary, Work of Repentance, and, as with Ropes about our Necks, with the deepeſt Humiliation, and ſincere Acknowledgements of our paſt Tranſgreſſions, and our utter Unworthineſs of the leaſt Mercy from him, let us return unto the Lord our God, from whom we have revolted by our Iniquities. Let us all now ſee, that there is no Evil ſo great as Sin is; and ſtrengthen our Reſolutions, and be more ſtrict upon our Watch, and diligent in our Endeavours, and fervent in our Prayers, for the Time to come, againſt our Corruptions. And though we cannot attain unto perfect Holineſs, in this Life, yet let us preſs after it, as far as we can, ſtriving for the Victory over our Luſts, and Paſſions, and labouring to conform ourſelves to every Command of God; that the Remainder of our Days may be ſpent in the Service of our Maker, and our Judge: then ſhall we be of the happy Number that order their Converſation aright, and ſhall ſee the Salvation of God. For thus ſaith the *Apoſtle*, with whoſe Words I now conclude, Rom. vi. 22. *But now being made free from Sin, and become Servants unto God, ye have your Fruit unto Holineſs, and the End everlaſting Life.*

SERMON

To be faved a Matter of the higheſt Importance.

SERMON XVII.

ACTS XVI. 30.

And ſaid, Sirs, What muſt I do to be ſaved?

IT is an Enquiry of the greateſt Importance that can be, and what well becometh every one of us to make, and to be moſt earneſtly concerned to give a good Anſwer to. This therefore is the Doctrine I have obſerved from theſe Words; viz.

Doc. It is of the higheſt Concernment unto periſhing Sinners, to be very ſolicitous, what they muſt do to be ſaved; or, to know, and practiſe, all that is neceſſary, in order to their Salvation.

There have been four general Heads named, as included in this Text, and Doctrine, worthy of our moſt ſerious Conſideration.

I. To

I. To ſhew you what it is to be ſaved; or, what is that Salvation which periſhing Sinners ſtand in Need of.

II. To evidence that periſhing Sinners may be ſaved; or, there is a Poſſibility, notwithſtanding their preſent miſerable Condition, that they may be eternally ſaved.

III. That periſhing Sinners muſt know, and practiſe, all that is neceſſary, in order to their Salvation; or, there is ſomething to be done, by them, that they may be ſaved.

IV. This is a Matter of the higheſt Concernment to them, and therefore they ought to be moſt ſeriouſly ſolicitous about it.

I have, at ſeveral Times, gone through the handling of the three firſt of theſe Heads; and have ſhewed you, what that Salvation is which the periſhing Sinner ſtandeth in Need of; and that he may poſſibly obtain it; I have alſo ſhewed you what the Sinner muſt do to be ſaved, namely, he muſt comply with the Demands of the Goſpel, by believing on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and repenting of all his Sins; the Nature, and Neceſſity, of which two great Goſpel Duties, I have endeavoured to ſet before you, and have alſo ſhewed you the Method to obtain theſe precious Gifts of God. I come now to the fourth, and laſt, general Head, under the Doctrine: viz.

IV. This is a Matter of the higheſt Concernment unto periſhing Sinners, and therefore they ſhould be moſt ſeriouſly ſolicitous about it. There is nothing of ſo much Concernment unto the Sinner, as that he may be eternally ſaved; the Loſs, or Gains, of a Soul, Heaven, or Hell, all turn upon it; nor is there any Thing ſo worthy of his moſt ſteady Care, and Solicitude. A Soul is too big a Thing to be trifled with; Heaven, and Hell, are too auguſt, and awful, to be ſported with; if any Thing demandeth our ſerious Thought, and cloſeſt

ſeſt Care, theſe do. Here are two Things which fall under Conſideration; namely,

I. To be ſaved is a Matter of the higheſt Importance to every periſhing Sinner.

II. There is the greateſt Reaſon, why every periſhing Sinner ſhould be moſt ſeriouſly ſolicitous that he may be ſaved.

I. The firſt Thing here is, to ſhew you, that to be ſaved is a Matter of the higheſt Concernment unto every periſhing Sinner. This is an Affair which every Child of *Adam* is concerned in, and that in the higheſt Manner, and Degree, that poſſibly can be. There is nothing ſo nearly concerns us all, nor any Thing of ſuch Importance to us, as this, that we eſcape Hell, and get ſafe to Heaven. Every Man's Intereſt is wrapped up in it, and it is his greateſt Intereſt, compared with which, every Thing elſe is as nothing.

To make this plain, let us diſtinctly conſider,

1. *Firſt*; Every Child of *Adam* is concerned in this great Affair.

2. *Secondly*; This is a Matter of the higheſt poſſible Concernment to us all.

1. *Firſt*; Every Child of *Adam* is concerned in this great Affair. It is an Enquiry which every one is to make, *What muſt I do to be ſaved*? Salvation! Where is the Man that has no Concernment in it! This is a Matter that belongeth not to a few only of the Sons, and Daughters, of Men, but it appertaineth to every individual Perſon, that ever did, or ever ſhall, deſcend from *Adam*, in the ordinary Way of Generation. If there be any Perſon here that has no Soul in him, let him withdraw, as having no Concern in this Diſcourſe; or if there be any Man whoſe Soul ſtandeth in no Need of Salvation, let him look upon himſelf as unconcerned herein. But, as no Man is deſtitute of a Soul, ſo neither is there any Soul but what wanteth to be ſaved. There never was,

nor

nor ever will be, any one ſingle Perſon, proceeding from the Loyns of *Adam*, but what, as he came into, and before he departs out of, this World, wanteth to eſcape the Miſery, and be ſecured of the Happineſs, of the other World. For, there is no Man, of all *Adam*'s natural Offspring, but what is a Sinner, and guilty in the Sight of the holy God; and, conſidered as ſuch, is deſtitute of the Divine Favour, and liable unto the Curſe of God; and therefore is periſhing in his Sin, and needeth to be ſaved. The *Apoſtle* therefore ſaid, Rom. iii. 9. *We have proved both Jews, and Gentiles*, (under which Diſtribution he comprehendeth the whole World of Mankind, from Beginning, to End,) *that they are all under Sin.* There is none among them exempted from being a Sinner; for as he adds, ℣. 23. *All have ſinned, and come ſhort of the Glory of God.* And becauſe all have ſinned, therefore all are obnoxious unto Puniſhment, and ſo are in a miſerable Condition, by Reaſon of Sin. Hence the *Apoſtle* ſaid, in the ſame Epiſtle, Rom. v. 12. *By one Man Sin entred into the World, and Death by Sin, and ſo Death paſſed upon all Men, for that all have ſinned.* Which, at once, ſheweth us, the real Guilt cleaving to all deſcending from the firſt Man, by Virtue of his Sin, and Fall; and the wretched miſerable Condition which Guilt has involved them in. And how clearly does the Apoſtle argue the miſerable Condition both of *Jews*, and *Gentiles*, i. e. of all Men, from their Sinfulneſs? ſays he, Rom. iii. 10. 17. *They are all under Sin*; and as a Conſequence of this, *there is none righteous no not one*; they have no real Goodneſs in them; beſides, they are hurtful, and injurious, to one another; *Their Throat is an open Sepulchre, with their Tongues they have uſed Deceit, the Poiſon of Aſps is under their Lips; their Mouth is full of Curſing, and Bitterneſs; their Feet are ſwift to ſhed Blood.* And over and

above all this Unhappineſs attending them, for the Preſent, the End of their wicked Life will be compleat Miſery; *Deſtruction, and Miſery, are in their Way, and the Way of Peace they have not known.* But of theſe Things I have diſcourſed more largely, under ſome former Heads.

Now, becauſe all have ſinned, and are become guilty, and are miſerable in their vicious Temper, and Diſpoſition, and liable to the Diſpleaſure of almighty God, to ſuffer the juſt Puniſhment of their various Sins; from hence it followeth, that it is a Matter, which concerneth every individual Perſon, to be ſaved from Sin, and the Miſery conſequent upon it. There is not a Mother's Child in this Aſſembly, (or that readeth this,) no, nor throughout the whole Earth, but what the great Affairs of Salvation have a Relation to, and they have their Concernment in them, whether they will, or no; that is to ſay, Salvation, or Damnation, Happineſs, or Miſery, will be their Unavoidable Portion.

1. This is a Matter which belongeth unto the great, and honourable, and rich, among the Sons of Men. As for the great ones of the Earth, they are not ſo elevated as to be altogether above Want; they are alſo liable to fall, and can feel Pain, even as other mean Men; and therefore it as much concerneth them to eſcape the Damnation of Hell, and poſſeſs the Joys of Heaven, as any Men in the World. For though the mighty Monarchs, ſupream Judges, and wealthy Dives, of this lower World, are ſo much raiſed above the Level of the Reſt of Mankind, that, in their exalted Station, they ſeem to be out of the Reach of many of the Dangers, which threaten thoſe who move in a lower, more laboured, and turbulent Sphere, yet, in this Regard, thoſe Grandees are but equal to the pooreſt Peaſant, the meaneſt Beggar, that waiteth at their Doors, that they are,

alike,

alike, ſubject to the Vengeance of almighty God, for their bold Tranſgreſſions of his holy Law; which no Priviledge of Peerage, and Eſcutcheon, will exempt them from Obligations to obey: And therefore they want to be ſaved, as much as any, the meaneſt, of their Fellow-Creatures. They may flatter themſelves, that they are above the Laws of Men, and accountable to none upon Earth; but they will find that there is a God in Heaven, who is higher than the higheſt, whoſe Government reacheth even to them, whoſe ſacred Laws take faſt hold upon them, and to whom they muſt be accountable, in the Day, when *the Father, without Reſpect to Perſons, will judge according to every Man's Works.* 1 Pet. i. 17. And becauſe, moſt commonly, the Condition of the great, and rich, and honourable, in this World, is attended with more, and ſtronger Temptations to Vice, to Contempt of God, and his Law, than that of other mean Men; and often they contract greater Guilt, by ſinning againſt the beſt Advantages, miſimproving the beſt of Tallents, and by giving the greater Scope, and Liberty, to their Luſts, and Paſſions, their Pride, and Luxury, their Avarice, and Ambition, their Oppreſſion, and Cruelty; therefore ſurely this Matter belongeth unto them, one would think, more, if poſſible, than unto others; becauſe their Danger is ſo much the greater, and their Miſery, if they periſh, ſo much the more inſupportable. Perſons, who are exalted in the Earth, and make a Figure among their Neighbours, do but deceive themſelves, while they imagine the Salvation of the Soul, and the future Happineſs, ſpoken of in the Goſpel, does not concern them, and that it is only for the meaner of the People, who are very much deſtitute of worldly good Things, to lay in for being happy in a Time to come; ſuch of whom the proud Phariſee could ſay, Joh. vii. 49. *This People,*

who know not the Law, are curſed: It is for this poor accurſed People, in this World, to trouble themſelves about Salvation, in the next; as for us, we are the Darlings of Providence, and in very happy Circumſtances, at preſent, and doubt not but we ſhall be always ſo; may the great ones of the Earth be ready to ſay. But, remember, O unthinking Perſons, that if you are but equal Sinners with the meaneſt of the People, and much more if you exceed them in Wickedneſs, (as too often ſuch do,) you are as truly under the Malediction of the Divine Law, as they, and therefore you ſtand in Need of Salvation as much as the meaneſt of them all; yea, and rather the more, becauſe it will be a more dreadful, and amazing, Thing, to thee, to fall, from the Heighth of thy preſent Enjoyments, and Satisfactions, in this World, into the very Dregs of Miſery, in the future World.

2. But then, on the other Hand, this is a Matter which belongeth unto the poor, mean, and low, among the Sons of Men. Think not, O poor Perſon, whoever thou art, that, becauſe thou art low, and deſpiſed, among Men, that therefore God will deſpiſe thee, and this his great Salvation is not for thee. Think not that it belongeth, only, to the rich, and great, thoſe who ſeem now to be highly diſtinguiſhed by Divine Providence, to gain Heaven hereafter; as if Heaven were inſeparably intailed upon them that poſſeſſed the moſt of this Earth; but as for us, poor ones, alaſs, we are the Outcaſts of the Earth, contemned by our fellow Creatures, and ſeem to be neglected by Providence, and ſhut out from the Benefits of it; and how then can we hope to enjoy the ſpecial Favour of God, or partake of the Salvation, and Happineſs, of the heavenly World? So may ſome poor Perſon be ready to ſay. When the *Pſalmiſt* reflected upon

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the unequal Diſtributions of Providence, in this World, and took a View of the Proſperity, Grandeur, Magnificence, and Eaſe, of many about him, and his own low, afflicted, diſtreſſed, Condition, among Men, he was ready to draw this wrong Concluſion, Pſal. lxxiii. 13. *Surely, I have cleanſed my Heart in vain, and waſhed my Hands in Innocency.* As if he had ſaid, to what Purpoſe is it for me to ſerve God; I ſee how his Favours are diſpenſed upon Earth; and it will be vain for me to entertain the Thought of obtaining his Favour in Heaven; but he correcteth himſelf, ℣. 15. *If I ſpeak thus, behold, I ſhould offend againſt the Generation of thy Children*; I ſhould lay a ſtumbling Block in their Way, and cauſe them to fall. Such miſtaken Conceptions of Things, perhaps, may have enervated all Attempts, in ſome poor Perſons, about their own Salvation; as if Salvation, and Heaven, were Matters too high for them, and what they had nothing to do with. But remember, O thou poor, and afflicted one, that thou haſt a Soul to ſave, as well as the richeſt of Men, and thy Soul is as valuable in it's Nature, and as precious in the Sight of God, as the Soul of the wealthieſt and moſt honourable among the Sons of Men. No outward Circumſtances of Riches, and Honour, can make any real Alteration in the Nature of the Soul, or render it truly better or worſe.

Men, indeed, may deſpiſe thee, for thy Poverty, but ſo doth not God, who is the *Maker of the Poor, and Rich* together, and who reſpecteth thee, as truly as the greateſt of Men, in the Offers of Salvation; and thou ſhalt be as welcome to put in for an Intereſt, and ſecure a Share in the Salvation of God, as any among the higher Orders of Men. It pleaſeth God, ſometimes, indeed, to ſelect ſome Inſtances of his Grace, from amongſt the Rulers, the Counſellors, and the great Men

of the Earth, an *Abraham*, a *David*, an *Hezekiah*, a *Chamberlain of the City*, and ſome of *Cæſar's Houſhold*, and after all their Abundance, which they poſſeſſed here, beſtow upon them the Kingdom of Heaven, as the Reward of their Vertue; but, more ordinarily, they are the lower Rank of Men whom God, in his ſovereign Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, calleth, and chooſeth unto himſelf, in whoſe Converſion, and Salvation, his rich Grace will be admired, and glorified forever. Hence ſaid the *Apoſtle*, 1 Cor. i. 26. ---- *Ye ſee your Calling, Brethren, how that not many wiſe Men, after the Fleſh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God hath choſen the fooliſh, ---- the weak, ---- the baſe Things of the World, and Things which are deſpiſed*, &c. And the Apoſtle *James* addreſſeth us in ſuch Terms as theſe, Jam. ii. 5. *Hearken, my beloved Brethren, hath not God choſen the Poor of this World, rich in Faith, Heirs of the Kingdom.* And when *John* ſent ſome of his Diſciples to our Lord, that they might receive Conviction from his own Mouth, and Works, that he was the true promiſed Meſſiah, ſaid Chriſt to them, Matth. xi. 4, 5. *Go, and ſhew John again thoſe Things which you hear, and ſee; the blind receive their Sight, and the lame walk, the Lepers are cleanſed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raiſed up, and the Poor have the Goſpel preached to them.* This is one of the wonderful Works of Chriſt, and a manifeſt Proof of his *Meſſiaſhip*, and of the Grace of God through him, that *the Poor have the Goſpel preached to them*; i. e. the Poor are evangelized, invited to partake of Salvation, and are inſtructed in the Way to Heaven. The pooreſt Perſon, then, here (before the Lord, (or that readeth this,) though he ſhould be deſtitute of worldly Poſſeſſions, and Accommodations, and hath neither Houſe, nor Land, Silver, nor Gold, nor any Titles of Honour, to diſtinguiſh him among Men; yea, though he ſhould be but a poor Servant,

vant, or a poor Slave, yet, has his Concernment in the great Salvation, offered in the Goſpel. He has a Soul to ſave, and there is nothing of that Weight, and Moment, to him, as Salvation is. To thee therefore, O Soul in peril, poor as thou art, is this Salvation ſent; and unto thee it belongeth to take Care that thou mayeſt be ſaved.

In ſhort; The great Requiſites of Salvation, namely, Faith in God, and in his Son, Jeſus Chriſt, and a crediting the Reports of the Goſpel, and an holy, religious, vertuous, Life, as the Product of this Faith, that is, that thou forſake all known Sins, and walk in Obedience to the holy Commandments of God, are the indiſpenſible Duty of every individual Perſon, whether high, or low, rich, or poor; ſo that there is not ſo much as one of us all but what have our Concernment in this Matter; and to each of us, in particular, may it be ſaid, *Ariſe thou, for this Matter belongeth unto thee.*

2. *Secondly*; I am now to conſider, That this is a Matter of the higheſt poſſible Concernment unto us all. As it reſpecteth us all, without Exception, ſo it reſpecteth us chiefly, and above other Things; yea, there is nothing that is of equal Importance to us with this, *What muſt we do to be ſaved?* There are many Things which we are all of us called upon to be concerned about, but there is none of them all that is to be compared with this, of our being eternally ſaved, as to the Nearneſs, and Importance, of it to us. What is there that does ſo nearly concern us, as to acquaint ourſelves with our Duty, and our main Intereſt, and diligently, and ſteadily, to perform the one, and purſue the Attainment, and Security, of the other? We may be negligent, and regardleſs, of every Thing elſe, in Compariſon with this, and be no great Sufferers by our Negligence; but if we are careleſs, and unmindful, ſupine, and

remiſs, in this momentous Affair, we ſhall be the greateſt Sufferers imaginable. We can't neglect our Duty, and our beſt Intereſt, without ſmarting for our Folly. 'Tis vain to be anxiouſly careful what we ſhall do to provide for our Bodies, to preſerve them from Dangers, or to recover them from any unhappy Circumſtances, which they may have fallen into, while we are remiſs, and careleſs, about our Salvation: for this is, of all Things, moſt needful, yea, the only needful Thing to us. Hence our Lord ſaid to *Martha*, when ſhe was encumbered about worldly Things, Luk. x. 42. *But one Thing is needful.* The Things we are ſo prone to concern ourſelves about, reſpecting our Bodies, and their comfortable Subſiſtence, are little, and trifling, lighter than the ſmall Duſt of the Ballance, when weighed againſt the Salvation of our Souls. All our Happineſs is laid up in this; and while other Things are but tranſcient, and fading, this Salvation is of the moſt laſting, and durable, Importance to us.

But to be more particular; There are two Things which will clearly evidence, that it is a Matter of the higheſt Concernment to periſhing Sinners to be ſaved: namely,

[I.] It is to ſave ourſelves, our own precious, and immortal Souls.

[II.] Our Happineſs, or Miſery, turneth upon it.

[I.] It is to ſave thyſelf, O periſhing Sinner, to ſave thy precious, and immortal Soul, and therefore it is of the higheſt poſſible Concernment to thee. What is there ſo near to us as ourſelves? And what can ſo nearly concern us? Is there any Thing equally dear to us as ourſelves? And can any Thing ſo much affect us, as that which toucheth our very ſelves? What then can be of ſuch Conſequence, and Importance, to us, as this is? What is there that can ſo juſtly chal-

lenge,

lenge, and employ, our chiefeſt Thought, and Care, and Labour, as to ſave ourſelves? It is therefore our own Salvation that we are called upon to be concerned about. The *Apoſtle* thus perſwades us, Phil. ii. 12. *Work out your own Salvation.* It is a Salvation that relateth, not to our ſeparate worldly Intereſts, but, to our very Perſons. *Save yourſelves*, ſaid the Apoſtle *Peter*. Act. ii. 40. Neither is it the Salvation of our Bodies only, from any temporal Evils, that may endanger them; but it is the Salvation of our Souls, that Divine Spark that is in us, which diſtinguiſheth us from the Brute; it is that intellectual, and immortal, Part in us, which rendereth us capable of partaking of the pure, and endleſs, Joys of Heaven, or undergoing the exquiſite, and everlaſting, Pains of the Damned. Though every Man, in his Wits looks upon himſelf obliged, by the grand Law of his Make, and the firſt Principle of ſelf Love in him, to do what he can to preſerve his Body, from the Evils which threaten it, yet, is it not of much greater Importance to him, to ſave his Soul from impending Miſery, exquiſite, and endleſs, than to ſave his Body from any Evil, which it can poſſibly be ſubject to? eſpecially, when we conſider, that, over and above, he will have this Advantage by ſaving of his Soul, that his Body alſo will, anon, come in for a Share in it's Salvation; whereas by ſaving his Body, only, and for the preſent, he loſes both Soul, and Body, forever hereafter. Hence Chriſt ſaid, Matth. xvi. 25. *Whoſoever will ſave his Life ſhall loſe it; and whoſoever will loſe his Life, for my Sake, ſhall find it.* He that thinketh to ſave the Life of his Body, at the Expence of his Soul, will ſadly be deceived, and, in the Concluſion, will loſe the Life which he thought to have ſaved; but he that will rather riſque the Life of his Body, that he might

ſave his Soul, ſhall joyfully find, in the End, that he has ſaved the Life of his Body alſo.

It is the Salvation of the Soul that was chiefly intended by the *Jayler*, when he cryed out, *Sirs, What muſt I do to be ſaved?* He did not mean, what muſt I do to preſerve my natural Life, the Life of my Body? for that was then ſafe, nor was there any known Danger that threatened it; but he meant, what muſt I do to ſave my Soul? The wonderful Works of God, and the preaching of the *Apoſtle*, (which, doubtleſs, at that Time, he took the Opportunity for,) awakened in him a Concern of quite an other Nature than the preſent Welfare of his Body, and his Soul then became his chief Care. And this is that which renders it a Matter of ſuch infinite Importance to us all, becauſe, O Man, it is thy Soul, thy precious, and immortal Soul, that thou art to be thoughtful about the Salvation of. Thus *Moſes* beſpake *Iſrael* of old, Deut. iv. 9. *Only take heed unto thyſelf, and keep thy Soul diligently.* And there are two Things which render our Concernment herein truly great, and of the higheſt Importance to us all; viz. That our Souls are our better Part, and they are our immortal Part.

1. Our Souls are, by far, our better Part. I cannot ſay, that our Souls are our whole ſelves, becauſe I think the Body to be eſſential to the humane Nature, and conſequently to the Identity of that Nature, in any one humane Perſon, or to the Sameneſs of the Perſon of every Individual partaking of that Nature. But however our Bodies may be eſſential Parts of ourſelves, yet our Souls are far more excellent, noble, and glorious Parts of ourſelves, and there fore it is of the higheſt poſſible Concernment to us, to ſave our Souls; becauſe it is to ſave all that is dear to us, not only our Bodies, but that Part of us which far more tranſcends our Bodies, in Excellency, and true Worth, than the Light of the

the Sun does the Glimmerings of a Glow-worm. For, a wiſe Man will ever account that to be of the greateſt Importance to him, and what juſtly challenges his greateſt Care, Thought, and Inſpection, which is, in itſelf, of the greateſt Value, Worth, and Excellency; as he is more concerned to preſerve his Treaſure, his Gold, and Jewels, than the deal Cabinet that containeth them; or to preſerve his Life, than a ſingle Joint of one of his Fingers.

Now, if we take a thorow View of ourſelves, what Part is there of us, that is ſo valuable, and excellent, in it's Nature, and Capacity, as our Soul? It may well be ſaid of the Soul, as of Wiſdom, *the Merchandiſe thereof is better than Silver, and the Gain thereof than fine Gold; She is more precious than Rubies, and all the Things thou canſt deſire are not to be compared with her.* So precious is the Soul, that the Redemption thereof ceaſeth forever, as to any of the Enjoyments of this World being a fit Price to give in Exchange for it. This is the great End of all our Faith, and Vertue, that our Souls may be ſaved in the Day of the Lord Jeſus; ſo ſaid the *Apoſtle*, 1 Pet. i. 9. *Receiving, the End of your Faith, the Salvation of your Souls.*

And what are our Bodies, whoſe Welfare, Eaſe, and Comfort, we are ſo prone to be very much concerned about, if compared with our Souls? What are they, but Lumps of groſs Fleſh, and Bones, Blood, and Sinews, made up, perhaps, of a little finer Clay than the common, and curiouſly, indeed, moulded, and diverſifyed, in the ſeveral Parts, and Powers, of them? Whereas, thy Soul, O Man, is of a ſpiritual, intellectual, Nature, near a Kin unto Angels, ſhining bright with the Rays of the Deity upon it. For, as *Elihu* obſerved, Job xxxii. 8. *There is a Spirit in Man, and the Inſpiration of the Almighty giveth them Underſtanding.*

ſtanding. It is this Spirit that animates, and acts, the Body, which, however capable of the animal Life, dies, and returneth to it's original Duſt, whenever the Soul, that active Principle of the humane Life, taketh it's final Leave of it. The Body is, indeed, wondrouſly made, in it's Parts, Contexture, and Powers, but how much more noble are the admirable Faculties, and Powers, of the Soul? How ſuſceptible is the Soul, by Virtue of that Underſtanding ſhe is furniſhed with, of all Kinds of Knowledge, natural, and divine? And what a large, extended, capacious, reach has the Underſtanding, like the Sun, compaſſing all it ſurveyeth, and ſurveying all that it compaſſeth, and not limited to Objects of Senſe? How receptive is it of the Diſcoveries of Truth, as well as inquiſitive after it, in the Myſteries of Art, of Nature, and of Grace? And how ſwiftly doth it move, and mount from Earth, to Heaven, and, in the Twinkling of an Eye, leap, from a Converſe with the loweſt Shrub, to ſurvey the Wonders of Divine Power, and Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, in the Magnitude, Order, and Revolution, of the heavenly Bodies, which roll over us? Yea, how capable is it of ſearching into the hidden Myſteries of Divine Wiſdom, Grace, and Love, in the Redemption of fallen Man; and of diſcovering ſuch a Fulneſs, Excellency, and Beauty, therein, as raiſes it's Admiration, and fixes it's Gratitude, and Praiſe? Thus it can look into the third Heavens, and contemplate the Glories of the Deity, and view over the Wonders of the incarnate Son of God, enthroned at the Right-Hand of the eternal Father.

What a wonderful Power is the Will, the Volition, and Choice, of the Soul? What a ſurpriſing Sway, and extenſive Dominion, has this governing Power in and over us? And yet with what perfect Liberty, and Freedom, does the Man Act

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in all his Choice, and Determinations? Though the Will always, and neceſſarily, is obſequious to the Underſtanding, and determines upon what that directive Power apprehendeth to be beſt, and, in this Senſe, can never be ſaid to be free, yet, is it forever free from all external Compulſion, ſo that no outward Force can compel, or controul it, in it's Acts, or neceſſitate it to Act contrary to it's own Determinations.

What an amazing Self-Conſciouſneſs attends the Soul, a Power of reflecting upon itſelf, of viewing over it's own Actions, and paſſing a Judgment upon them, as they are morally good, or evil, either to our Plaudit, and Comfort, or to our Condemnation, and Uneaſineſs?

And how is the Soul furniſhed with various Affections, and Paſſions, which are as a ſtrong Guard about it, for our Defence, and Safety, that we may be put upon ſhunning what appeareth to be hurtful, and be influenced to embrace what ſeemeth to be beneficial, and advantageous to us, and, according to the Scituation of Things with us, to afford us Pain, or Pleaſure, Delight, or Torment?

But, to all of theſe natural Endowments, let us add the Conſideration, of the Capacity of the Soul for very great, farther, additional Excellencies, and Improvements, eſpecially in moral Perfections, which none of all the viſible Creation, beſides Man, are capacitated for; view the Soul as a Subject capable of receiving the moſt excellent Vertues, and Graces, while here, and of perfect Purity, and unſullied Rectitude, hereafter; receptive of the Beauty of Holineſs, the Image of God upon it, in this World, and of a State of compleat, and endleſs Glory, and Happineſs, in the Preſence, and Enjoyment, of God, and Chriſt, and Fellowſhip with holy Angels, in the heavenly World; and ſay, now, what is there ſo excellent, and noble, and of ſo much Worth, and Value, as our Souls are?

are? Verily; This is, by far, our better Part, to which our Bodies, beautiful, and wondrous, as they be, are not worthy to be compared; and therefore the Welfare, and Salvation, of our Souls are, of all Things, Matter of the higheſt Concernment to us.

2. Our Souls are our immortal Part, that Part of us which ſhall never die, and upon this Account are preferrable to, and more to be regarded by us than, our Bodies; and therefore we ought above all Things to be concerned that they may be ſaved. After all our Care of our Bodies, to preſerve, and defend them, and render them eaſy, and comfortably provided for; though we ſhould heap up Gold, and Silver, in an Abundance, and give our Bodies the utmoſt Fulneſs of Entertainment, and gratify all their Senſes to the Height, yet ſhall we not be able, by all our Thought, and Pains, to keep them alive, that they ſhould never ſee the Pit. Pſal. lxxxix. 48. *What Man,* (what ſtrong Man,) *is he that liveth, and ſhall not ſee Death? Enoch,* and *Elijah,* were favoured with an immediate Tranſlation to a better World, without going through the ordinary Road, and ſuch may be the Portion of thoſe holy ones, who ſhall be found alive at the ſecond Coming of our Lord; but otherwiſe, to die is the common Lot of all Men, and the *living know that they ſhall die.* For our Bodies are corruptible in their very Nature, being conſtituted of ſuch Materials as we know to be periſhable, and ſo put together as renders them ſubject to a Diſſolution; and by the Law of their Maker, they are doomed to return to their original Duſt: for thus he hath ſaid, Gen. iii. 19. *In the Sweat of thy Face ſhall thou eat Bread, till thou return unto the Ground; for out of it waſt thou taken; for Duſt thou art, and unto Duſt ſhalt thou return.* So that *it is appointed unto Man once to die.*

But

But now, our Souls are immortal, and ſhall never die, never ceaſe to have a Being, a Being capable of Action, and Enjoyment.

There go no corruptible Materials, like thoſe of our Bodies, and therefore no jarring Qualities, into the Make of our Souls, from whence we are ready to conclude they partake of a natural Immortality. Nor can we conceive how any external Force, from mere Matter, can have any effect upon them to produce a Diſſolution, nor how any Kindred Spirit ſhould be able thus to hurt them; becauſe a Spirit is deſtitute of the known Properties of Matter, and not paſſible, as that is. Every Man will readily grant that it is better to be a Man than a Brute; and yet; if we have nothing to do with an After, and Endleſs, Exiſtence, the Brutes have much the better of us in this Life, in that they have more exquiſite Senſation, at leaſt as full bodily Gratifications, are ſubject to no Remorſe, and take Leave of Life without any Reflection, and Concern. And what Nation, and People are there in the World, who have not ſome, though it may be, very imperfect, Conceptions, of their exiſting after Death? The *Phythagorean Metempſychoſis* is entirely founded upon this Conception; and ſo are the *Elyſian* Fields of the ancient heathen Poets. Yea, Eternity ſeemeth evidently to be ſtamped upon the Deſires, and Actions, of the Soul. How craving, and thirſty, is the Soul after a State of Immortality? What a ſtrong Appetite has it to live forever, in Children, and Lands, and Monuments, and the various Methods Men take to be known in future Ages? And "however tranſcient the Actions of Men are, in a "Phyſical Conſideration, yet, in a moral one, "they are permanent, and abiding. The natural Notions we have of the Goodneſs, and Juſtice, of God, and the View of his providential Diſtributions among Mankind, in this preſent World, and

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the Influence, which the Conſideration of the Immortality of the Soul, has upon Perſons and Societies, to promote their moral Vertue, and ſuppreſs all that is vicious, and diſorderly, all ſtrongly pleadeth for it.

However, whether the Soul of Man be immortal in it's Nature, or no, it has Immortality ſtamped upon it by the Law of it's Maker. Though the almighty Creator could eaſily annihilate our Spirits, if he pleaſed, (which, I ſuppoſe, no created Being could do,) yet, He hath ſufficiently given us to underſtand, that he will not; and therefore, in his holy Word, we find, the Former of the Spirit of Man within him, ever treating it as an immortal Being, and propoſing eternal Rewards, and Puniſhments, to it; (as we ſhall ſee under ſome of the following Heads,) which aſſures us, that whatever the Soul be in it's Nature, it is immortal, by the Determination of it's Maker, and ſhall never ceaſe to have a Being. Hence we are told, Eccl. xii. 7. When the Duſt returneth to the Earth, as it was, *the Spirit ſhall return unto God, who gave it.* And, Matth. x. 28. *they, that kill the Body, are not able to kill the Soul.*

And now, what is there of ſuch Concernment, and Importance, to us, as the Safety, and Welfare, of ſuch an excellent, and immortal, Being, as the Soul is? What can, in Reaſon, be ſuppoſed to challenge our Thought, and Care, equal to that which is, in it's own Nature, moſt valuable, and durable? If that Part of us, which is to laſt forever, which ſhall exiſt when Time itſelf, or the Succeſſion of Ages, ſhall be no more, is not worthy of our moſt ſerious Conſideration, what ſhall be done for it's Safety, and our moſt diligent Labour to promote, and ſecure, it's eternal Well-being, What can be ſo? 'Tis this precious, this immortal, Soul of thine, that diſtinguiſhes thee from the common Herd, and raiſes thee to ſomething

thing of an Equality with the Angels of God; this Soul, which is more excellent than Rubies, and more durable than the fineſt Gold; it is this high, and Heaven-born Soul, that thou art to take Care of, and endeavour to ſave, by a Life of Faith, and Obedience, by inuring of it to Vertue, that it may be prepared for Glory. And, ſurely, ſince it is thy own Soul, thy very ſelf, thy better Part, thy immortal Part, therefore thou oughteſt, above all Things, to be greatly concerned for it's Welfare; and do all that thou canſt, that it may poſſeſs itſelf in perfect Peace, and want nothing to render it ſecure from Miſery. Wilt thou act ſo fooliſh, and unreaſonable, a Part, as to be greatly concerned for thy Body, what thou ſhalt eat, and what thou ſhalt drink, or wherewithal thou ſhalt be clothed, and how thou ſhalt preſerve thy Body from Dangers, and from Death, and uſe thy beſt Endeavours for it's Safety, and to reſtore it to Health, and Eaſe, when Sickneſs, or Pains, invade it? Wilt thou do all this for that which is but periſhable Duſt, and muſt ſhortly dye, whether thou wilt, or no? and, at the ſame Time, wilt thou be altogether unconcerned about thy Soul; thy Soul, which is, in the very Nature of it, ſo vaſtly preferable to thy Body; thy Soul, which is much more thyſelf than thy Body is; thy Soul, in which thou wilt exiſt, when thy Body ſhall be turned into Duſt, and Putrefaction? Wilt thou not be more concerned, that this thy Soul may be made Partaker of a Salvation, ſuitable to it's Nature, and Wants, and Duration? Oh! What Stupidity, and Madneſs, has ſeized upon the Children of Men! Oh! What a fooliſh Bargain does he make of it, who riſqueth his precious, his immortal Soul, for the Sake of gaining any of the ſhort-lived Pleaſures, and Enjoyments, of a dying Body, and a periſhing World! Remember the Words of our bleſſed Lord, who very well

the Worth of a Soul, and the Vanity of the World, *What is a Man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole World, and loſe his own Soul? Or what ſhall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul?* Matth. xvi. 26.

So that from the Conſideration of the Nature of our Souls, as our better, and our immortal Part, it is evident to every reaſonable Man, that it is a Matter of the higheſt poſſible Concernment, and there is nothing of equal Importance, to us all, that we do all that we can, in the diligent Improvement of all our Abilities, Opportunities, and Advantages to ſecure their eternal Salvation.

SERMON

SERMON XVIII.

ACTS XVI. 30.

And said, Sirs, What must I do to be saved?

IN the former Part of the Day, I entered upon the Consideration of the fourth, and last general Head, viz. That it is a Matter of the highest Concernment unto perishing Sinners to be most seriously sollicitous about their Salvation: and have shewed you that it is a Matter of the greatest Importance that can be to obtain Salvation, it is so to every individual Person, because it is to save our own selves, our Souls, which are our better, and immortal Part. I would now farther argue,

II. It appeareth to be a Matter of the highest possible Concernment, to perishing Sinners, to save their Souls, if we consider, that their Happiness, or Misery, and that compleat, and endless, turneth upon this very Point. Surely no Man in the Exercise of his Reason, will think, that his own Happiness, or Misery, is a Matter that doth not greatly concern him. The whole Bent, and Thirst, of the humane Nature is after Happiness: *Who will shew us any Good?* is the constant Language of Mankind. The very Make of our Bodies, and Endowments of our Minds, point to a Prospect of, a Pursuit after, and a ready embracing, what is agreable, delightful, and

entertaining to us, or, what will render us happy; and are armed againſt what would have a Tendency to make us any Way miſerable. And however Men may differ in their Apprehenſions of what is Happineſs, and what is Miſery; or be miſtaken in their Thoughts of the Way, and Means, to obtain the one, and avoid the other; yet, this is what all Mankind agree in, that every Man would be happy, if he could, and no Man would be miſerable, if he could help it. So that there is no Man but what looks upon Happineſs, and Miſery, as what do above all Things, more immediately and directly, concern him, and eſtimateth all other Things as he apprehendeth they make for one, or other, of theſe; and conſequently, that Happineſs, and that Miſery, which are moſt full, and compleat, which are moſt durable, and laſting, are, of all others, what he is moſt concerned to purſue, and embrace, or carefully to ſhun, and avoid.

All the Difficulty, then, lies in thorowly convincing the Minds of Men, whatever be their other Notions of Happineſs, and Miſery, that true real Happineſs, or Miſery, and that compleat, and endleſs, turn upon this Salvation, which I am ſpeaking of; that they will certainly be happy, compleatly, and for ever ſo, if their Souls are ſaved; and that they will be certainly, fully, and forever, miſerable, if they are not ſaved. If Men were but once thorowly convinced of this, that their Happineſs, or Miſery, perfect, and everlaſting, turn upon the Salvation of their Souls, they would then ſee the Neceſſity of their exerciſing a due Care about it, and need no farther Proof, that to ſave their Souls is a Matter of the higheſt poſſible Concernment to them. I ſhall therefore endeavour to lay the plain Conviction of this, briefly, before the Minds of Men under theſe three Particulars.

I. That

1. That Men will certainly be happy, or miſerable, according as they are duely careful, to ſecure the Salvation of their Souls, or not.

2. This Happineſs, or Miſery, will be perfect, and compleat in their Kind.

3. Their Happineſs, or Miſery, will be eternal, and never have an End.

And now, give me your ſerious Attention, while I offer ſomething to each of theſe.

1. Men will certainly be happy, or miſerable, according as they are duely careful, to ſecure the Salvation of their own Souls, or not.

Particularly ;

1. He will certainly be an happy Man, who is duely concerned about the Salvation of his Soul. He that is truly ſolicitous, what he muſt do to be ſaved, and, accordingly, ſincerely endeavours to acquaint himſelf with the Whole of that Duty, which he owes to God, his Neighbour, and himſelf, and is diligent to perform his Duty, without any allowed Omiſſions, in all the ſeveral Branches thereof, in a Life of Faith, and Obedience ; that Man certainly is, and will be, an happy Man.

He is an happy Man, let his Circumſtances, in worldly Regards, be what they will ; becauſe he acteth up to the Dignity of his Nature, and followeth the Dictates of his own Mind, duely informed, and exerciſed, and therefore preſerveth the inward Peace, and Tranquility of his Mind, which is the ſolid Foundation of his Comfort, and Joy ; and doth not lay himſelf open to the juſt, and ſevere, Reproaches of his own Heart, which alone would damp his Joy, and mar his Comfort. *Happy is he that condemneth not himſelf, in that Thing which he alloweth.* Rom. xiv. 22. Thus Godlineſs affordeth him Contentment in every Condition, and that inward Satisfaction, which the World cannot give, and the Rejoicing of his Conſcience, teſtifying for him, that he has

acted as becometh a rational Creature, that he has done his Duty, and that he has ſecured his main Intereſt, and that, let come what will come, he is ſafe, and has no juſt Reaſon to fear any Evil. So ſaid the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſalm cxix. 165. *Great Peace have they that love thy Law, and nothing ſhall offend them.* What are all the Pleaſures, ariſing from the Objects of Senſe, compared with the Satisfaction of Mind, ariſing from a Man's being pleaſed with himſelf, upon a ſerious View of his walking in the Ways of Wiſdom, which are Ways of Pleaſantneſs, and Paths of Peace.

And ſuch a Man will certainly be happy, in the Favour of his Maker, and Sovereign, and his Judge, who cannot but obſerve, approve of, and take Delight in, all ſuch whoſe Hearts are perfect towards him, as their's are, who are careful to believe all that God hath revealed to them, and to practice all that he hath required of them. *Bleſſed are the undefiled in the Way, who walk in the Law of the Lord.* Pſalm cxix. 1. Their Faith of what God has ſpoken, and in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, accompanied with unfeigned Repentance, ſecureth to them, according to the Goſpel-Covenant, the Forgiveneſs of their Sins, a Deliverance from the Curſe, and a Title to Heaven hereafter. How readily, may we well ſuppoſe, from the Goodneſs of the Divine Being, as well as from his expreſs Declarations, doth he admit ſuch among his Favorites, lend them his Ear, and fix his Eye, and Heart, upon them, for good, and receive them into his ſpecial, and glorious Preſence. And what can any Ways give Uneaſineſs to them, or affect them with any Degree of Miſery, ſo long as the Great God, the Fountain of all Good, ſtandeth engaged, from his peculiar Love to Holineſs, and holy Perſons, and from his gracious, and unfailing, Promiſe, to protect, and defend them, to ſupply all their real Wants, to ſuffer no

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Evil to come nigh them, to make all Things work together for their Good, and finally to bring them ſafe to the happy World? Rom. viii. 31. *If God be for us, who can be againſt us?*

2. He will certainly be a miſerable Man, who is not duly concerned about the Salvation of his Soul. If a Man will not be inquiſitive what he muſt do to be ſaved; if he will not be at the Pains to obſerve, and practiſe, according to what the Word of God directeth him to, and requireth of him, that he may ſave his Soul, he is, and he will be, a miſerable Man, whatever may be his outward Circumſtances, and Condition in the preſent World.

What though ſuch an one ſhould enjoy the utmoſt Affluence of worldly Pleaſures, Riches, and Honours? He is miſerable in the midſt of all, under the Power, and Tyranny, of baſe Luſts, and ſordid Paſſions, which prey upon him, and lead him captive at their Will; ſo that ſhould he march at the Head of Armies, or ſit on the Throne of Empire, and *promiſe himſelf Liberty*, and think Scorn to be under the Reſtraints of Law, *yet is he*, the worſt of Servants, 2 Pet. ii. 19. *the Servant of Corruption* being *brought under Bondage* thereto. And one would think this to be Miſery enough, to be in Bondage, and Slavery; for a rational Soul to be perpetually trudging on in the meaneſt, and dirtyeſt, Employments, crouching under the Burdens of Earth, and Filth, and obſequious to the Will of the moſt tyrannical, and the baſeſt, of Maſters. But beſides, ſuch a Man is miſerable from his own Reflections, and he cannot think ſoberly, without the Accuſations, and Condemnings, of his own Heart; ſo that either he muſt not think at all, or not think to Purpoſe, on what he has moſt Reaſon to think cloſely, or elſe his own Thoughts will be a Torment to him. And if this be Pleaſure, to do thoſe Things which are

accompanied, or followed with the tormenting Reflections of a Man's own Mind ? I pray, what is Misery !

Moreover, he will be miserable, under the deserved Punishment of his foolish Neglect of God, and his own Soul. For if he is not saved, (and this he has taken no Care of,) he will, and must certainly be damned : Mar. xvi. 16. *He that believeth not shall be damned.* There is no middle State between these two, but one, or other of them, Salvation, or Damnation, the Pleasures, and Joys, of Heaven, or the Fire, and Brimstone, of Hell, will most certainly and unavoidably, be the Portion of every Individual among the Sons, and Daughters, of Men. Hence you find our *Saviour*, distributing all Mankind into these two Companies, namely, Matth. vii. 13, 14. those that are going in the *broad Way leading to Destruction*, and those that are going in *the narrow Way that leadeth unto Life.* The final State of all Men will be Life, or Death, either to partake of Glory, Honour, Immortality, and eternal Life, resulting from the Presence, and Favour, of God, or Indignation, and Wrath, Tribulation, and Anguish, as the necessary Effect of a Separation from him, who is the Fountain of Life. So that, as our Lord has informed us, Joh. v. 29. *They that have done good, shall come forth to the Resurrection of Life; and they that have done evil, unto the Resurrection of Damnation.* From whence we see plainly, that there is no Possibility of avoiding one, or other, of these two States, Happiness, or Misery ; and that, of Consequence, he who doth not partake of Salvation unto Life, and Happiness, must necessarily be miserable, and cannot possibly escape the Damnation of Hell.

And now, is it a little, trifling, insignificant Matter to thee, whether thou art saved, or damned ? Is Heaven to be despised, and Hell sported with ?

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Let the Condition of the damned in Hell be what it will, whether thou conceiveſt of it, juſt as it is, or no, yet it is a State of Miſery, directly oppoſed unto true Happineſs, and to all that is comfortable and delightful to us? And now, is a State of Miſery to be choſen, rather than Happineſs, by a rational Creature? Or can it be equal to thee, whether thou art happy, or miſerable? Say, now, O Soul, doth there any Thing concern thee equal with this? Should any Thing touch thee ſo nearly, tenderly, and effectually, as this? Or canſt thou employ thyſelf about any Thing of greater Importance to thee? What is there, of all the Concernments of this World, but what riſeth lighter than Vanity, when weighed againſt the Salvation of thy Soul?

But then, and what addeth to the Importance thereof;

2. This Happineſs or Miſery, will be perfect, and compleat, in their Kind. It will not be an Happineſs, or Miſery, of a lower Nature, and Degree, that will be the certain Fruit, and Effect, of thy Care to ſave thy Soul, or thy Neglect of it; like what the Generality of the unthinking World is ready to call Happineſs or Miſery, viz. the having, or not having, ſuch, or ſuch Meaſures of the Profits, Pleaſures, and Honours, which are gratifying to our Senſes; but it is an Happineſs, and Miſery, greater in Kind, and more extenſive in Degree, and therefore vaſtly more weighty, than all that ever any did, or poſſibly could, experience in this World. It is ſuperlative, and intenſe, Happineſs, or Miſery.

Firſt; The Happineſs of being ſaved is unſpeakably great. 'Tis great in Kind, beyond any Thing this World can produce, and great in Degree, far exceeding what the Objects of Senſe can reach to. Hence it is ſtyled, Heb. ii. 3. *So great Salvation*; but it doth not ſay how great; for

for the Powers of the Tongue, and the Force of Language, are too weak, and feeble, to expreſs it; nor can our moſt enlarged Conceptions compaſs the Fulneſs thereof: Think all that you can, as belonging to this Salvation, and it is *ſo great Salvation*, and more; for, *Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, neither have entered into the Heart of Man, the Things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* 1 Cor. ii. 9. This Happineſs is, indeed, deſcribed, in the ſacred Pages, by ſuch Alluſions, as ſerve to raiſe in our Minds, the brighteſt, and moſt exalted Idea of it, that any Thing, we converſe with, can afford us; as the Joys of Marriage, the Fulneſs of Riches, and Honour, of a Kingdom, a Throne, a Crown, and the like; but all of theſe Metaphors, by which a Repreſentation of it is attempted, fall vaſtly below what it is, in the real Nature of it. It is ſuch a State, as comprehendeth in it, a full, and perfect Freedom from all Evil, of every Sort, and Degree, and the fulleſt Enjoyment of the moſt compleat Good, even a Good every Way equal to our ſpiritual Nature, and anſwerable to our moſt enlarged Deſires: and therefore we may juſtly conclude it to be an Happineſs equal to what our Nature is capable of, i. e. the higheſt we can poſſibly enjoy. So that if we remain utter Strangers to the particular Inſtances, which go into the Compoſition of this happy State, and know not of what it conſiſteth, yet, having full Aſſurance of the Reality, and Compleatneſs, of it, one would think theſe ſhould be enough to determine us, in our Reſolutions, to uſe our beſt Endeavours to obtain it. But the ſacred Scriptures acquaint us, with ſome of the eſſential Ingredients of this Happineſs, which ſerve to enlarge our Conceptions of it, and fire our Ambition, and Thirſt, to ſecure it to ourſelves: ſuch as, the Enjoyment of the Bleſſed God, the infinite Fountain of Being, Perfection, and all Good,

Good; and of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, the great Purchaser of all our Happiness, and the immediate Centre of it; and of the *Holy Spirit*, as the God of all Grace, and Consolation; and of Heaven, the supream Seat of all true, and unsuspected Felicity. If we can conceive of any Place more glorious than Heaven, wherever it is, and of any Objects more compleatly delightful, and satisfactory, than God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, then may we look out for a State of Happiness beyond that of the Salvation of our Souls; or else, remain assured, that herein lyeth the utmost Degrees of Felicity, beyond which our Nature, yea, the Nature of Angels, cannot possibly aspire.

Secondly; Thus also the Misery is intense, and insupportable. It is set before us, in the holy Scriptures, in the most strong, and lively, the most surprising, and frightful, Metaphors; it is called, Mat. xxiii. 33. *The Damnation of Hell*; it is termed, Mat. xxii. 13. a being *cast into outer Darkness, where shall be weeping, and gnashing of Teeth*; it is expressed, Rev. xxi. 8. by *a Lake of Fire and Brimstone*: It is painted out, Matth. xxv. 41. as being *cursed* and associated with *the Devil and his Angels*. And yet it is certain, that the most glaring, and horrid, Images, the most astonishing, and terrifying, Appearances, that Words can raise in the Minds of Men, are but a faint Resemblance of what this Misery really is. It includeth in it, a total Deprivation of all that is joyous, and comfortable, to us, even to the minutest Degree thereof; so that, like *Dives*, the poor miserable Creature will not have so much as a Drop of Water to cool an enflamed Tongue, though it be roared out for with ever so much of Anguish. Besides, this Misery carries in it the most exquisite Pain, and Torment, that can be; from the fierce Wrath of an angry, and Almighty, God, falling heavy

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upon the Soul; (and who knoweth the Power of his Anger! Oh, who can tell what the Weight of an almighty Arm is!) and from the dreadful, pungent, and continual, Stings of an enraged Conſcience, like an *Harpy* let looſe upon the Soul, and preying upon it, and kindling a Fire, in the Breaſt of the Sinner, hotter and more tormenting than any will be without him.

Think now, O Sinner, is it not moſt reaſonable, that, the greater the Happineſs is, which is propoſed to a Man, ſo much the greater ſhould be his Concern to ſecure an Intereſt in it? And the greater the Miſery is, which we are warned of the Dangers of, ſo much the more circumſpect, watchful, cautious, and earneſt, we ſhould be, that, if poſſible, we may eſcape the fearful Evil that threateneth us? Is it not thus with Men, in all the Affairs which relate to the preſent Life, and World? So much the greater the Treaſure is, which, it is propoſed, he might gain to himſelf, by ſuch, or ſuch, likely Methods, which never have been known to have failed them, that have made a thorow Tryal of them, ſo much the more readily will a Man hearken to the Propoſal, and diligently apply himſelf to the Uſe of the directed Means, and be the more laborious, and unwearied in his Purſuit after the End aimed at, and not be eaſily diverted therefrom: he that would not be moved to put a Finger to the Buſineſs, for the Sake of gaining five Shillings, will be wrought upon, to undergo many Fatigues, encounter many Difficulties, and run almoſt any Hazards, from the fair Proſpect of getting Thouſands a Year. And ſo, the greater Danger any Man is warned, and appriſed of, the more he will bethink himſelf, by what Means he ſhall beſt guard againſt it, and the more vigorouſly fly from, or exert himſelf to overcome it: he that would not turn aſide out of the Way of a feeble Enemy, will yet carefully ſhun

a potent one, and get, as faſt as he can, out of the Way of a Neſt of Rattle Snakes, and fly, unarmed, from the roaring Lyon, and the ranging Bear.

And why ſhould not Men act as reaſonable, and prudent, a Part, in the greater Affairs of their Souls, as they are wont to do in the leſſer ones of their Bodies? Since the Happineſs, or Miſery, of their Souls, in another World, is not only as certain, but far greater than any that can happen to their Bodies, in the preſent World, why ſhould they not be moſt intenſly concerned, moſt ſolicitous, and thoughtful, about this Matter, and be moſt active, and diligent, and laborious in the Uſe of the moſt probable Means, to ſave their Souls? Is not the completeſt Happineſs, our Natures are capable of, worth our ſtriving for? Why then are we ſo much engaged in purſuing leſſer Degrees of Happineſs, nay, what has nothing of true Happineſs in it, and ſo negligent of that which is real, and ſubſtantial? If the moſt intenſe Miſery doth not challenge our Thought, and Pains, to avoid it, why do we ſtart at Thunder, look pale, and tremble, at the ſhaking of the Earth, or fear to go down into the Grave? Verily it is a Matter of the greateſt Conſequence that can be, to *fly from the Wrath to come*, and to *lay hold on eternal Life*. For,

3. This State of Happineſs, or Miſery, will be eternal, and never have an End. 'Tis an amazing Circumſtance attending the Happineſs, or Miſery, of the other World, that they are boundleſs in Duration. When we have meaſured the Duration of them by all the Art of *Arithmetick*, and added all the Sums together that we can poſſibly number, and, when we have done, let each individual Unit, of this aggregated Number, be eſtimated at a Million of Ages, it will bring us no nearer to the Period of their endleſs Duration, than the firſt ſingle Unit, in Numbers, ſtanding for a Millionth Part of a Minute, would do. For that

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which has no End, can have no Approaches to it. He that ſhall be happy, in the future, heavenly, World, will continue to be ſo, without ever meeting with any Thing to break in upon the Harmony of his Mind, or give the leaſt Diſturbance, or Uneaſineſs, to him, throughout the never-ending Ages of Eternity. And he that ſhall be miſerable, in the future State, will know no Period, or Mitigation, and Abatement, of his inexpreſſible Pain, and Anguiſh, throughout the endleſs Ages of Eternity.

Eternity! How amazing is the Thought! All Words are loſt in deſcribing it! Our very Thoughts are ſwallowed up in Meditation upon it! Oh! What Weight does the Conſideration of it add to the Good, or Evil, the Happineſs, or Miſery, of the other World! To be happy, and for ever ſo; this is Happineſs indeed! To be miſerable and forever ſo; this is Miſery in all its Terrors!

Such ſhall the Happineſs of the Saints be, in Heaven; it will be as laſting as it is perfect, in Kind, and Degree: of which the holy Scriptures aſſure us, when they ſtyle {our Salvation, an *eternal Salvation*; Heb. v. 9. and our Redemption, an *eternal Redemption*; Heb. ix. 12. and the Life in Heaven, an *eternal Life*; Mar. x. 30. and the Manſion there referved for us, an *Houſe eternal in the Heavens*; 2 Cor. v. 1. and our Inheritance, *incorruptible, undefiled, which fadeth not away*; 1 Pet. i. 4. and our Glory, *an eternal Weight of Glory*; 2 Cor. iv. 17. and all of this as directly oppoſed unto *Things that are ſeen, and temporal.*

Such alſo ſhall be the Miſery of Sinners in Hell; the ſame Word of God aſſureth us, Mar. iii. 29. it will be an *eternal Damnation*; it is not only Fire, but *everlaſting Fre*; Matth. xviii. 8. There, we are told, Mar. ix. 44. *the Worm dyeth not, and the Fire is not quenched*; it is a Fire that burneth without Intermiſſion, and without End: and we are aſ-

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ſured, it is *a Wrath to come*; Luk. iii. 7. It will ever be to come, in the Duration of it. And hence our Bleſſed Lord hath given us this Account of the two different States, of the good, and Bad, Matth. xxv. 34, 41, 46. the one ſhall *inherit the Kingdom prepared for them*; the other ſhall *depart accurſed into everlaſting Fire*; *theſe*, the Wicked, *ſhall go away into everlaſting Puniſhment*; *but the Righteous into Life eternal.* And what Words can make it plainer to us, that the Happineſs of Heaven, and the Miſery of Hell, will be, each of them, eternal, and without End?

Well then; ſurely, to be happy, or miſerable, compleatly ſo, and that forever, this is a Thing of the greateſt Concernment, to us all, that poſſibly can be, and, what, above all Things, challenges our moſt ſerious Thought, the deepeſt Attention, and the cloſeſt Application. For, what can affect us, and make any Impreſſion upon us, if Things eternal will not? Has it not pleaſed God, in his boundleſs Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, to ſet before us the Proſpect of eternal Happineſs, and eternal Miſery, as the ſtrongeſt, and moſt powerful, Arguments, to cure us of our fond Affection to the tranſitory Enjoyments of this World, which are ſo apt to engroſs all our Thought, and Care, and Labour, and to excite in us a greater Regard to our Souls, and make us ſeriouſly ſolicitous, what we ſhall do to be ſaved? And ſhall we act the rational Part, if we go counter to all this Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, and ſuffer ourſelves to be chiefly affected with the lower, and ſhort-lived, Pleaſures, or Inquietudes, of the Body, and preſent Time, and little regard thoſe compleat, and durable ones of the other World? What Ingratitude to God! what Treachery to ourſelves! would this be; and how dreadfully will it aggravate our Condemnation!

Put the Caſe, that a State of eternal Exiſtence

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in Happineſs, or Miſery, were a Matter of Uncertainty to us, yet the bare Poſſibility, and much more the great Probability, that ſuch a Thing might happen to us, makes it infinitely reaſonable, that we ſhould chooſe to act upon the Belief of it; becauſe we could receive no great Damage, by our Belief of it, if it ſhould chance to be falſe, and ſhould be infinitely advantaged by it, if it happen to be true. But if the Word of God be true, (and there is no Reaſon to doubt it,) then it is beyond Diſpute, that we ſhall exiſt forever, either in the Enjoyment of the Pleaſures of Heaven, or under the Torments of Hell. And think now; How poor a Thing is an Happineſs that will preſently have an End, and then be ſucceeded with a contrary State of Miſery, of a much greater Duration? How low are thoſe Joys while they laſt? and how fleeting are they, and ſoon over, and gone? A Man can hardly have any Taſte, or Reliſh, of them, for Fear of what is a coming, and becauſe it haſteneth ſo ſwiftly upon him. A State of Uneaſineſs, that laſteth but for a little while, and then is ſucceeded with perfect Eaſe, with endleſs Pleaſure, who would count it Miſery? Who could not, who would not, bear one Quarter of an Hour's Pain, tho' very great, to be freed from Pain forever after? The Thoughts of the following Eaſe, and Pleaſure, without any Mixture of Pain, and Sorrow, and the Quickneſs of the pleaſurable State's arriving, would take away the uneaſy Senſations of the foregoing Miſery, or at leaſt greatly abate them, and render them very tollerable. But what Satisfaction can there be in a Moment's Pleaſure, followed with an endleſs Eternity of Pain, and Torment? It is the Length of Pain that is the moſt inſupportable Part of it; it encreaſes by Continuance, and grows more weighty by it's Duration. The Succeſſion alſo of Pain to Pleaſure aggravates it; whereas the

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last Series being pleasant, after which no Fit of Pain shall return, greatly enhances the Joy. In short; What can any Man desire, and seek after, if not to be compleatly, and forever happy? And what has he any Reason to shun, and fly from, if not from that Wrath, and Misery, which is exquisite, and which, while he is under the dolorous Impressions of it, will still be forever to come?

These Things, then, do abundantly shew us, that this is a Matter of the highest possible Concernment unto every perishing Sinner, to be very solicitous what he must do to be saved, to be in good Earnest about the Salvation of his Soul; for it is thy own Salvation, the Salvation of thy precious, and immortal Soul, and thy Happiness, or Misery, compleat and endless, turns upon it.

I should now go on to the *second* Thing I proposed under this *last* general Head, namely, that therefore there is the greatest Reason why every perishing Sinner should be most seriously solicitous that he may be saved: but I shall conclude with an Inference, or two, from what has been said.

USE I. Hence see the Reason of your Ministers Importunity with you, that you would truly believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and unfeignedly repent of all your Sins, and lead new, and holy Lives: because a Life of Faith on Christ, and Obedience to him, is the Way to be saved. And if to be saved be a Matter of such great Importance, if nothing does, or can, concern you so much, as that you may, at last, escape Hell, and get safe to Heaven; and your Happiness, or Misery, and that perfect, and eternal, depend upon this very Thing; can it then be wondered at, that your Ministers are so unwearied, and importunate, in their Cries to Heaven for you, and in their solemn Addresses to you, that you might be persuaded to come to the Faith of the Son of God, and walk before him in Holiness, that you may be saved.

For, what is there that can engage our Concern about you, equal to this? We may be concerned to ſee you thrive, and flouriſh, in the World, and be glad to ſee you prudently avoid all thoſe Courſes that tend to hinder, and take all thoſe Methods that may happily promote, your worldly Proſperity; we are concerned to ſee the divine Protection over you, when you go out, and when you come in, and defend you, and your little ones, from the Arrows of Death; but we cannot be equally concerned for theſe Things, as we are to ſee you and your Children, walk in the Truth, a ſober, a vertuous Generation, with the evident Tokens of Salvation upon you; and to have the good Hope, through Grace, that we ſhall meet you in Heaven, and, together with you, partake of that far more exceeding, and eternal, Weight of Glory, thoſe perfect, and endleſs, Satisfactions, and Delights, which God hath promiſed unto his Servants, after they have finiſhed their Courſe of Faith, and Obedience, here. It is this Concern for your future, and eternal, Happineſs, which engages our Thoughts, filleth us with Cares, and Fears, and Tears, and maketh us fervent in our Labours, inceſſant in our Addreſſes to you, and willing to ſpend, and be ſpent, for you; nor could we be faithful to the great Intereſt of our Lord, nor faithful unto you, whoſe Souls are committed to our Truſt, if we did not labour herein, ſtriving with all our Might, and uſing all the Art of Perſuaſion we can, that, if by any Means, we may be inſtrumental to ſave the Souls of them that hear us. It is not wholly for our own Sakes, (tho' Neceſſity is laid upon us, and Wo is unto us if we do it not,) nor is our Office in the Miniſtry of the Goſpel of Chriſt, (it is well known,) the Way to worldly Riches, and Honour, but it is for your own Sakes, that we addreſs you ſo warmly, preſs you ſo earneſtly, and are loth to take any

Denial,

Denial, that you would ſave yourſelves from an untoward Generation, that you eſcape the exquiſite, intollerable, and everlaſting, Miſery of the Damned, and may poſſeſs the State of true, unſuſpected, and endleſs, Happineſs, among the Righteous, in the coming World. This, being a Matter of the greateſt Importance that we can poſſibly treat with you about, does ſufficiently demand of us, *to lift up our Voice like a Trumpet, to cry aloud, and not ſpare,* in our *warning every Man, and teaching every Man, that we may preſent every Man perfect in Chriſt Jeſus.* And ſo far ſhould our Fidelity, in preſſing our Maſter's Will upon you, and our Endeavours to recover you from the Paths of Sin, to the Practice of your whole Duty, be from alienating your Hearts, and Affections, from us, as though we were your Enemies, becauſe we tell you the Truth, that, in all Reaſon, you ought ſo much the more to be conciliated to us, as your beſt Friends, and highly to eſteem of us, in Love, for our Work's Sake. For, in our thus doing, my Brethren, we ſeek not your's, but you, that we may, if poſſible, win you over to a Life of ſerious Religion, and true Happineſs, and that you yourſelves may, finally, reap the Advantage of our wholſome Inſtructions, and earneſt Importunity, in the eternal Salvation of your own Souls.

Brethren; *Our Hearts Deſire, and Prayer, for you all is, that you may be ſaved.* Oh! How can we bear the Thought, of our dear People their periſhing under the Wrath of God! With what Heart-Aching muſt we look upon any of you, who are our Charge, and ſee you going on in your Sins, wilfully deſpiſing your own Souls, ſlighting the offered Mercy of God, and turning your Backs upon Heaven, and ruſhing yourſelves down into the Torments of the Damned, and all for the Sake of the empty, vaniſhing Pleaſures of Senſe, and Time! How terribly piercing muſt it be unto

us, to ſtand by the Bed-Side of any of our People, in their dying Hours, and ſee the Anguiſh of their Souls, leſt they drop into Hell; and hear their diſmal Complaints againſt themſelves, for their fooliſh Neglect of their eternal Intereſt, and it may be, in the moſt doleful Accents, crying out, Oh! all is too late! all is too late; And how ſhocking muſt it be to us, think you! to ſee a drunken, profane, irreligious, debauched, impure, Wretch, leaving the World, in a ſtupid Unconcernedneſs about the eternal State he is preſſing into, and dying, as he lived, ſenſeleſs of God, and Religion, and his own Soul!

Theſe Things make our Hearts to bleed within us; and well may we lay ourſelves out, in our earneſt Pleadings with God for you, and our importunate Pleadings with you, on the Behalf of God, that you would ſeriouſly bethink yourſelves, and carefully, and timely, ſhun the dreadful Danger, and eſcape as for your Lives, the Lives of your never-dying Souls, to the Hope ſet before you, and may get ſafe to Heaven. *Now then*, (as the holy *Apoſtle* expreſſed it,) 2 Cor. v. 20. *We are Embaſſadors for Chriſt, as though God did beſeech you by us, we pray you in Chriſt's Stead, be ye reconciled unto God*: and as he goes on, *we then, as Workers together with him, beſeech you alſo, that ye receive not the Grace of God in vain.* And if, under God, we are happily inſtrumental of converting any one Soul, *let him know*, (Jam. v. 20.) *that he who converteth a Sinner from the Error of his Ways, ſhall ſave a Soul from Death, and ſhall hide a Multitude of Sins.*

From hence we may learn the amazing Folly they are guilty of, who make the Things of this World their chief Concern. For, ſince it is a Matter of the higheſt Importance to a periſhing Sinner, to be ſaved, becauſe it is the Salvation of his own Soul, and his eternal Happineſs, or Miſery, turns upon it, one would think that every Man

ſhould

ſhould endeavour wiſely to ſubject, all the Buſineſſes, and Affairs, of this Life, to the greater Intereſts of an other, and better Life, and do all that he does with an Eye to his future, and everlaſting Well-being. How amazing is it, then, to ſee ſo many guilty of this Folly, in the Exaltation of it, to neglect their Souls, and their eternal Intereſt, and laviſh away all their Thought, and Time, upon their Bodies, and the Concernments of it? And this Folly is to be found not only among the Neceſſitous, who are forced upon a great Deal of Care, and Pains, to get their daily Bread, but among the wealthy, who, one would think, have enough of this World, and need the leſs to be concerned about it; and not only among weak, ignorant, ſimple People, but among the well educated, and inſtructed Part of Mankind, who, one would think, ſhould know better. Thus the *Apoſtle* lamented the Caſe of the *Philippians*, in his Day, Phil. iii. 18, 19. *Many walk, (of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping,) the Enemies of the Croſs of Chriſt, whoſe End is Deſtruction, whoſe God is their Belly, whoſe Glory is their Shame, who mind earthly Things.* And is there not juſt Reaſon for the like Lamentation over the Profeſſors of our Days? How ſurpriſing would it be, if the Sight were not ſo common, to ſee Men in a continual eager Purſuit after the Riches of this World, and give their Minds, and Bodies, ſcarce any Reſt, but unweariedly turn every Stone, to accompliſh their greedy Deſires, and yet hardly ever allow themſelves one ſerious Thought, how to get durable Riches, and Righteouſneſs, or, what they ſhall do to be ſaved! What a prodigious Sight is, a Man ſweating, and puffing, upon the Hunt after the low empty Titles of Honour, amongſt Men, and yet ſo unconcerned about his Soul, as to leave it expoſed to Shame, and everlaſting Contempt! Ah! poor unthinking Crea-

ture! Are the Riches, and Honours, of this World worthy thy Care? and are thy Soul, and Heaven, and eternal Happineſs unworthy thy Concern? I beſeech you, think ſeriouſly, a little, and you will, doubtleſs, ſee abundant Reaſon to correct thy preſent Folly, and Madneſs.

But of all Folly, and Madneſs, none riſes to ſo high a Degree, as that of thoſe who rather take Pains to damn their Souls, than to ſave them; who are ſo hot in their eager Purſuit of the World, that they will ſtick at no Wickedneſs, or Villany, no Falſhood, and Lying, no Fraud, and Cheating, to compaſs their Deſigns; and drive on ſo furiouſly, in the Ways of Sin, in their Drinking, and Whoring, and Blaſphemies, as if they were afraid that Damnation would not come faſt enough, but they muſt needs meet it half Way. O thou mad Fool! Who giveſt thyſelf ſuch a Looſe in thy vicious Practices, that thou ſtickeſt not to call for Damnation upon thyſelf, and upon thy fellow Creatures, and whoſe Mouth is full of Curſing; whoſe Folly can be equal with thine! Is it, indeed, a pleaſurable Thing to be damned; to lye burning in Hell, under the Torments of Fire and Brimſtone, throughout an endleſs Eternity? Canſt thou, indeed, bear Damnation, and ſport thyſelf in the Flames, and laugh in the midſt of devouring Fire? Oh! lay thine Hand upon thy Mouth, confeſs, and bewail, thy paſt Folly; remember the Battle, and do no more.

In a Word; Let us all ſeriouſly conſider, that the greateſt Gratifications of the bodily Appetites, and Indulgence of our Senſes, with any of the Enjoyments of this World, are not to be compared with that compleat, and endleſs, Happineſs, which is included in the Salvation of our Souls; nor will make Amends for the exquiſite, and everlaſting Pains, which will be the diſmal Iſſue of a Life of

Senſe, and Irreligion; and therefore wiſely learn to live by Faith, and not by Sight, and improve the Things here below, in a due Subordination to our ſpiritual, and eternal Intereſt: that whatever our State, and Condition, may be in this World, we may be truly, and forever, happy, in the next. Hearken therefore diligently to the Advice of our Bleſſed *Saviour*, Luk. xvi. 9. *Make to yourſelves Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteouſneſs, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlaſting Habitations.*

Sinners ought to be moſt Seriouſly Solicitous to be Saved.

SERMON XIX.

ACTS XVI. 30.

And ſaid, Sirs, what muſt I do to be ſaved?

IT is a very important Enquiry, and demandeth the cloſeſt Regards, from us all, to the Truths contained in it; which I have endeavoured to comprize in this Doctrine, *viz.*

DOCT. It is of the higheſt Concernment unto periſhing Sinners, to be very ſolicitous, what they muſt do to be ſaved; or, to know, and practiſe, all that is neceſſary, in order to their Salvation.

The Method I propoſed, in diſcourſing on this Text, and Doctrine, was;

I. To ſhew you what it is to be ſaved, or what is that Salvation which periſhing Sinners ſtand in need of.

II. To evidence that periſhing Sinners may be ſaved; or, there is a Poſſibility, notwithſtanding their preſent miſerable Condition, that they may be eternally ſaved.

III.

III. Periſhing Sinners muſt know and practiſe, all that is neceſſary, in order to their Salvation; or, there is ſomething to be done, by them, that they may be ſaved.

IV. This is a Matter of the higheſt Concernment to them, and therefore they ought to be moſt ſeriouſly ſolicitous about it.

I am upon the *laſt* of theſe Heads; under which, I told you, I ſhould conſider theſe two Things; namely,

I. To be ſaved is a Matter of the higheſt Importance to periſhing Sinners.

II. There is the greateſt Reaſon, why periſhing Sinners ſhould be moſt ſeriouſly ſolicitous that they may be ſaved.

And I have ſpoken to the *firſt* of theſe, and ſhewed you, that every Child of *Adam*, from the higheſt to the loweſt, is concerned in this Matter, and it is an Affair of the higheſt poſſible Concernment to him; becauſe it is to ſave himſelf, his precious, and immortal Soul, than which nothing can ſo nearly affect any Man; and his certain, compleat, and endleſs, Happineſs, or Miſery, turneth upon it, than which nothing can be of greater Importance to him. If any thing in the World is, or can be, of Weight, and Moment, with us, certainly this of our being ſaved ought to be ſo, and that the higheſt that poſſibly can be; our own Weal, or Wo, compleat, and endleſs, unavoidably dependeth upon it.

I proceed now to the *ſecond* Thing under this Fourth general Head.

II. To ſhew, that there is the greateſt Reaſon, why every Sinner ſhould be moſt ſeriouſly ſolicitous about his being ſaved. You ſee how ſolicitous the *Jaylor* was about his Salvation; he expreſſed

preſſed himſelf with the greateſt Concern, and even with Agony of Soul, *Sirs, what muſt I do to be ſaved?* He was moſt earneſtly deſirous to know what he ought to do, and he was willing to do all that he ſhould know to be neceſſary, that he might be ſaved. And ſo ought every Sinner to be in good Earneſt about his own Salvation; his Heart, and Soul, ſhould be engaged in it, and he ſhould apply himſelf hereto with the greateſt Thoughtfulneſs, and Diligence; and not treat the Affairs of his Soul, and his eternal Salvation, as tho' they were little trifling Matters, to be regarded only by the By; but he ſhould have his Heart ſet upon them, reſolvedly fixed and determined to Mind them above all Things, and not ſuffer any Thing to divert, and hinder him from his conſtant Purſuit after them. He ſhould be ever ready to hearken to Inſtruction, that he may be acquainted with the beſt Means to further his Salvation, and be ever ready to apply the Means to the End, that if poſſible he may obtain it. He ſhould ſlip no Opportunity unimproved, willingly loſe no Advantage, to promote his Salvation, and be very careful not to allow himſelf in any Thing that would prejudice his Views, quaſh his Hopes, or be an Impediment to his obtaining the Crown of Life. Thus every Sinner ſhould be moſt ſeriouſly ſolicitous, what he ſhall do to be ſaved. The Reaſonableneſs of this I ſhall endeavour to enforce from theſe ſeveral Heads of arguing; viz.

1. This is of all Concernments the greateſt, and moſt neceſſary.

2. It is a Matter of very great Difficulty.

3. After all the Attempts of many, there are really but few that ſhall be ſaved.

4. Every one that ſhall be ſaved will be ſeriouſly ſolicitous about it.

1. This is of all Concernments the greateſt, and moſt neceſſary. I have, I think, already evi-

denced,

denced, that it is a Matter of the higheſt poſſible Concernment unto poor periſhing Sinners to be ſaved, and I do not now mean to go over the former Heads of Argument, nor to advance any new ones, in Proof, that our eternal Salvation is, of all Concernments, the greateſt ; but I ſhall only take Occaſion from hence to argue the Reaſonableneſs of every Man's being moſt ſolicitous about it.

For, certainly nothing can be more reaſonable than, that every Man ſhould employ his deepeſt Thought, and induſtrious Care, chiefly about that which, all Things conſidered, is of the greateſt Importance to him. It argueth great Prudence, clear Underſtanding, mature Judgment, to give every Thing its due Weight, in our Thought, and Concern about it. If it be a Matter of no great Worth, and Value, in it ſelf, and of no great Importance to us, to what Purpoſe will it be to ſpend our Thought, and Time, about it? For if we obtain it, we ſhall be little, or nothing the better for it ; or if we miſs of it, we ſhall be no great, if any, Sufferers by the Loſs of it : And it would be Folly indeed to diſquiet our ſelves for nothing. It is an Argument of very great Weakneſs, and Indiſcretion, in Perſons, to weary themſelves for very Vanity, and to labour in the Fire to no good Purpoſe ; to have their Hearts ſet upon Trifles, and their Souls engaged in that which is but *Lyes, and Vanities, and Things wherein there is no Profit*, as the Prophet *Jeremiah* ſpake, Jer. xvi. 19. But to have our Minds deeply engaged, and our Labour vigorouſly ſpent, about what does moſt nearly concern us, and is of mighty Conſequence to us ; to ſecure what will render us compleatly, and forever happy, and fly, at the utmoſt Diſtance, from what would make us perfectly, and forever miſerable ; this will argue that we have a juſt View of Things, that we are wiſe, and prudent, in the Judgment which we

make

make of them, and in our proportioning our Concern to the Importance of them: This will be to be *wiſe for ourſelves*, for our beſt Intereſt, and for our latter End.

It is a Rule of Prudence, in the Affairs of the preſent Life, that a Man ſhould be careful to ſecure a much greater Intereſt, though it be at the Expence of a leſſer. Any Man will readily part with a Shilling to ſecure his Inheritance, or ſuffer a joint to be taken off that he may preſerve Life. Since therefore the Salvation of the Soul, as our great and main Intereſt, unſpeakably tranſcendeth all the Intereſts of the Body, and this preſent World; (as we have ſeen;) This then is what Men ought to be moſt thoughtful about, and laborious after, let the World go how it will with them, that they may get ſafe to Heaven, and may have their Deſires more than anſwered, and their Hopes greatly exceeded, in the full, and laſting, Enjoyment of all that God hath promiſed.

We ſee what Pains Men take to gain what they eſteem, and value, of this World; the Merchant projecteth, and bends his Thoughts, and ventures his Subſtance, and often hazards his Perſon, to encreaſe his Stores; the hardy Warriour undergoes the Fatigues of the Champain, long Marches, cold Lodgings, hard Fare, and ſtands the Enemies Fire, to get him a Name; and, when they have done all, their Eſtates wear away, and their Laurel ſoon withereth. And ſhall we not be as eager, and lay ourſelves out as fervently, to gain the Happineſs of Heaven, which is ſubſtantial, and durable? The *Apoſtle* obſerved of the *Græcian* Racers, who exactly dieted, and prepared their Bodies, before-hand, and then ſtrained their Nerves, ſpent their Lungs, and tired their Bodies, with the Violence of their Motion, 1 Cor. ix. 25. *They do it, to obtain a corruptible Crown*; (a pitiful Wreath of Oaks, or Laurels, that fade in the uſing,)

uſing,) *but we an incorruptible*; a Crown of Glory in Heaven, which fadeth not away. And ſurely, this incorruptible Crown is worth contending, and agonizing for; it is the *unum neceſſarium*, the one Thing needful, and every Thing elſe is of no Value in compariſon with it. Hence our Lord ſaid, Luk. x. 41, 42. *Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and troubled, about many Things; but one Thing is needful; and Mary hath choſen that good Part, which ſhall not be taken away from her.* It is very evident, that, by the *one Thing needful*, our Lord meant the Salvation of the Soul; for the ſacred Story informs us, that the Two Siſters, *Martha*, and *Mary*, at whoſe Houſe our *Saviour* then was, were very differently employed; that whilſt *Mary* very devoutly *ſat at Jeſus's Feet*, and heard his Word, diligently attending to his pious, and heavenly, Inſtruction, which peculiarly related to her ſpiritual, and eternal Intereſt, *Martha was cumbered about much ſerving*, that is, in making Proviſion for the Entertainment, and Accommodation of the Body; And ſaid Chriſt to her, *Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and troubled, about many Things*, i. e. ſuch Things as relate only unto the Body; and the preſent Life, and therefore are but of leſſer Moment; whereas, there is but *one Thing needful*, the Care of the Soul, and *this good Part Mary hath choſen*, while ſhe is diligently hearkening to my Inſtruction, and therefore we will not take her off from this important Affair, to attend only the Services of the Body, and ſuch a needleſs Ado about providing for it.

Our preſent *Life doth not conſiſt in the Abundance which a Man poſſeſſeth*; Luk. xii. 15. much leſs does our real Happineſs depend upon it. We may be truly happy without any great Matter of this World; but we cannot poſſibly be happy, even in the greateſt Fullneſs of this World, unleſs we partake of the Salvation offered in the Goſpel; yea,

yea, a Man may poſſeſs the greateſt Affluence of this World's Good, and be miſerable after all, but it is impoſſible he ſhould be miſerable who is ſecure of the Salvation of his Soul; unleſs to poſſeſs all that is agreeable, and delightful, that is entertaining, and pleaſureable, to our rational Nature, and to have a clear unclouded perception of our Enjoyments, without the leaſt Fear of ever loſing them, be the ſame Thing with being miſerable. And therefore, what is there that any Man can be ſolicitous about, if not about this ſo great Salvation, which is ſo abſolutely neceſſary to our true, and compleat, and everlaſting Happineſs? Since therefore, *to be ſaved* is of the greateſt Concernment to us, certainly then we ought to be moſt ſeriouſly ſolicitous about it. But I have carried ſomething of this Argument into the former Diſcourſe, and therefore will not any farther enlarge upon it now, but proceed to the Second Head of Reaſoning propoſed; viz.

2. It is a Matter of exceeding great Difficulty to be ſaved, and therefore poor periſhing Sinners had need to be moſt ſeriouſly ſolicitous about it. As Salvation is a Matter of the greateſt Importance, ſo it challenges our greateſt Solicitude; but yet, notwithſtanding the great Importance of it, if it were a Thing that could eaſily be obtained, by bare wiſhing for it, or with very little Pains, there would then be no need for us to exert ourſelves to the utmoſt, and lay out our whole Strength; becauſe leſs Labour, and Pains, would be ſufficient to anſwer the End. That which is eaſy to be done, needeth no great Pains in the doing of it.

But then, the exceeding great Difficulty of being ſaved, added to the Importance of it, ſhews us that there is no Room for us to be careleſs, and negligent, in this Matter, and to think of ſparing ourſelves for Things of greater Worth; but it

requireth, the whole Bent of our Minds, with all proper Diligence, and Fidelity, the applying ourſelves cloſely to the Labour, and putting forth our Strength and Vigour, our judicious Diſcernment, firm Reſolution, regular and ſteady Appetites, and Averſions, that we may overcome the Difficulties, remove the Impediments, and, at laſt, get out of the Reach of Miſery, and poſſeſs everlaſting Felicity.

It is a Principle of right Reaſon, that, when a Matter is of the greateſt Concernment to us, and at the ſame Time exceeding Difficult, the Difficulty ſhould be ſo far from diſcouraging of us, that it ſhould only quicken us to the greater Intenſeneſs of Thought, Strength of Reſolution, vigorous Endeavours, and patient Labours, that we may be able to ſurmount the Difficulty, and maſter the Oppoſition, and beat down whatſoever ſtandeth in the Way of our ſecuring what is ſo needful for us. Accordingly, it is an Obſervation of the *Preacher*, who is alſo the *wiſe Man*, Prov. x. 10. *If the Iron be blunt, and he do not whet the Edge, then muſt he put to the more Strength; but Wiſdom is profitable to direct.* So much the more difficult the Work is, which is neceſſary for us, ſo much the more need have we to uſe our Prudence, and Strength, that we may improve every Advantage, *by wheting the Edge*, making Uſe of the beſt Means, and *putting to the more Strength*, by exerting ourſelves with the greater Vehemence, and *directing ourſelves by Wiſdom*, in the prudent applying our Skill, and Might, according to the Nature, and Circumſtances, the Weight, and Importance, of the Buſineſs we have before us; that we may conquer the Difficulty. And becauſe it is a very hard, but neceſſary, Work, for the periſhing Sinner to come up to the Terms of the Goſpel, and live a Life of Faith on the Son of God, to overcome the Propenſity of his

Nature,

Nature, and his contracted Habits, to that which is Evil, and alter the Bias of his Mind, and the Tenor of his Life, therefore it ſo much the more ſtands him in Hand to be in good Earneſt, to lay himſelf out to the utmoſt, with all imaginable Solicitude, and fixed Reſolution, and conſtant Labour, that he may ſecure his own eternal Salvation. For, Since Salvation is poſſible to him, (as we have ſeen,) let the Difficulty be ever ſo great, this ſhould only ſo much the more whet his Appetite, and put him upon ſhaking off his Sloth, and rouze his Courage, and Reſolution, Vigour, and Strength, that he may not fail of ſo great a Good, through his own Default; but may, in the Concluſion, reap the Benefit of all his Labours, in the full Enjoyment of the Crown of Glory he ſo earneſtly contendeth for. Hence is that of the *Apoſtle*, Heb. vi. 11, 12. *We deſire, that every one of you do ſhew the ſame Diligence, to the full Aſſurance of Hope to the End; that ye be not ſlothful, but Followers of them, who through Faith, and Patience, inherit the Promiſe.*

And indeed, who can imagine that ſo great a Matter as the Salvation of the Soul, ſo extenſive a Benefit, as eternal Life, and Happineſs, in Heaven, could be obtained without Difficulty? Are great Things to be done without proportionable Thought, and Pains? Who acquireth any great Meaſures of Knowledge, without much ſtudy, which is a Wearineſs to the Fleſh? Or who encreaſeth in Riches, ordinarily, but he that is diligent in his Buſineſs? Or how ſhall he gain the Maſtery that will not ſtrive for it? The *wiſe Man* obſerved, Prov. xiv. 23. *In all Labour there is Profit.* He that would enjoy the Profit muſt labour for it. And is it not fitting, then, that compleat, and endleſs, Happineſs ſhould require our earneſt, unwearied Struggle to obtain it? A too eaſily gained Happineſs would be in Danger of being contemptible

contemptible in our Eyes, and utterly ſlighted by us. There is a Congruity, and Suitableneſs to our Make, and Temper, that what is of greateſt Worth, ſhould coſt us deareſt: the greateſt Good ſhould be purchaſed with the greateſt Labour.

And truly, there is no little Difficulty in being ſaved, whatever vain Minds may think of it. It is not a few good Wiſhes, now and then, or a few lazy, inactive Deſires, that will be ſufficient to eſcape the Miſery of the Impenitent, and obtain the Happineſs of the Righteous. A *Balaam* may cry, Num. xxiii. 10. *Let me die the Death of the Righteous, and let my laſt End be like his!* And all be but a vain Wiſh, while he is not careful to live the Life of the righteous. Nor is it enough that a Man be in a good Mood, and Fit of Devotion, now and then; that he put on a ſober Frame, and Temper, of Mind, perhaps, once a Week, when he putteth on his *Sabbath* Apparel; or that, upon ſome ſpecial Occaſions, while he is under ſtrong Convictions, or the Apprehenſions of ſore Judgments, or the quick Senſe of ſignal Mercies, he can then do ſomething that looks like working out his own Salvation: it is not enough that he ſay over a few Prayers, that he frequent the Houſe of God, that he do his Neighbour no Hurt, and that he be charitable to the Poor; Theſe Things, alone, will never carry a Man to Heaven, and intereſt him in the great Salvation ſet before him in the Goſpel. No; It requireth more Labour, and Pains, than all of this cometh to, that we may ſcale Heaven's Walls, and win the immarceſſible Crown of Glory. Therefore we read, Matth. xi. 12. *From the Days of John the Baptiſt, until now, the Kingdom of Heaven ſuffereth Violence, and the violent take it by Force.* Not tear it to Pieces, as ſlighting, deſpiſing, and endeavouring to deſtroy it; but, uſe an holy Violence, and Force, an unfainting Struggle of Mind, and agonizing

Conflict with all Oppoſition, like that of Soldiers ſtorming a City, that they may ſeize upon the Kingdom of Heaven, and make it their own. So muſt we, if we would overcome the Difficulties that lie in our Way, and make the Kingdom of Heaven our own; otherwiſe we ſhall be in Danger of being overpoured by Numbers, and fail of the Grace of God, and Hope of Life.

Let us a little conſider the Difficulties in the Way of the Sinner's Salvation, and which require his greateſt Solicitude, diligent Labours, and conſtant Watchfulneſs, that he may be able to maſter them; and theſe Difficulties ariſe from the Sinners own Heart, the World about him, and from a malicious Devil.

(1.) There is that in the very Heart of the Sinner himſelf, which rendereth it exceeding difficult for him to be ſaved. For there is in the Heart of every Sinner, by Nature, a very great Averſion, and direct Oppoſition, both to the Nature of Salvation, and the only Way leading thereunto; ſo that the Sinner muſt firſt maſter himſelf, alter his Bent, and Inclination, and go againſt the Grain of his own Heart, which ſurely is no eaſy Matter, e'er he can be ſaved.

Though it be true, that there is no Man, in his Wits, but what would be ſaved if he could; that is, there is no Man but what would chooſe to avoid every Thing that he thinketh to be hurtful to him, and to poſſeſs all that he ſuppoſeth to be delightful to him; becauſe every Man has a natural Deſire of Happineſs, and Dread of Miſery; nevertheleſs, when we conſider what the Salvation is, which I am ſpeaking of, and the Happineſs included in it, we ſhall ſee, that there is that, in the Heart of the Sinner, which is directly oppoſite thereto. For the Salvation, under Conſideration, neceſſarily includes in it, the perfect Rectitude of the Soul, and, what is Conſequent thereon, the Enjoy-

ment

ment of God, or the Soul's Union unto God, the Perfection of Holineſs, as it's Centre, without which the Man cannot be happy: but, alaſs! when we look into the Heart of the Sinner, and view it in it's natural State, we ſhall find it corrupt, and depraved, vicious, and impure, and therefore, in the Diſpoſition, and Temper of it, as contrary unto Rectitude, as Darkneſs is to Light, and ſo utterly averſe from an Union with the infinitely holy God. Hence it is that the *Apoſtle* obſerved, Rom. viii. 7. *The carnal Mind is Enmity againſt God.* That is, there is in the depraved Heart of the Sinner a natural Enmity to that Rectitude, and Holineſs, which is eſſential to the Divine Nature; and conſequently an Enmity unto his own true Happineſs.

And how ſtrong is the Averſation, in the Heart of the Sinner, to the only preſcribed Way of Salvation? God requireth thoſe Things of the Sinner, in order to his being ſaved, which are extreamly contrary unto the natural Bent of his own Heart; and that without any Impeachment of his Juſtice, and Goodneſs, any more than for an earthly Monarch to require it, of his rebel Subjects, to lay aſide their rebellious Principles, and ſubmit to his Government, as the Way to enjoy his Favour.

Thus God requireth of the Sinner to believe the Goſpel, and to believe in Jeſus Chriſt, to forſake all Self-Dependance, and go to Chriſt, and depend upon him, alone, as meriting all for him: but now, the Sinner is *ſlow of Heart to believe* the Goſpel; yea, there is in him *an evil Heart of Unbelief*; the Doctrine of a *crucified Saviour* appeareth Fooliſhneſs unto him; the Revelations concerning the Natures, Perſon, Offices, and Benefits, of Chriſt, are not only unaccountable, but, impoſſible to his carnal Reaſon; he is too highly opinionated of his own Underſtanding, to think

himself obliged to believe what he cannot see through; or he is too proud of his own Excellencies, and fond of his own Strength, to be beholden to an other; and therefore, as Christ said of the unbelieving *Jews*, in his Day, so may it be said unto all Sinners, under the Power of their Apostacy, Joh. v. 40. *Ye will not come unto me, that ye may have Life*: and, Joh. vi. 44. *No Man can come unto me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him.*

So also God requireth it of the Sinner, that he subdue his corrupt Inclinations, that he mortify his Members which are upon the Earth, that he endeavour to keep under his Body, and bring it into Subjection, and not allow himself in the Gratification of any one inordinate Lust; and he requireth it of him to obey every Divine Precept, both of the first, and second Table of the moral Law, and that he carefully observe all the Parts of instituted Worship, and Religion: but what an Aversion is there, in the Heart of the Sinner, to all of this? how difficultly is he perswaded to abandon the Ways of Wickedness, and to walk in the Paths of Godliness? his *carnal Mind is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be.* Rom. viii. 7. No; the Carnality must first be subdued, the Enmity be slain, the Man's Heart must be changed, before he can yield an acceptable Obedience to the Law of God. The Sinner loveth his Lusts, he rolls them, as sweet Morsels, under his Tongue, and, from the Delight, and Pleasure, he takes in them, it is hard, and difficult for him to part with them. The Way of the Divine Precepts is a strange uncouth Thing to him, it thwarts his natural vicious Appetites, contradicts his sensual Pleasures, and forbiddeth every lawless Indulgence of them, and from hence it becomes very distastful to him; and therefore he chooseth to walk in that Way which is pleasing

to him, and to turn from that holy Commandment, which is so contrary to his corrupt Inclinations. Thus, as the *Prophet* described the foolish Conduct of Sinners, Isa. lxvi. 3. *They have chosen their own Ways, and their Soul delighted in their Abominations.* So their Passions influence their Wills, and their Wills ride their Understandings, and thus they choose their own evil Ways, because they delight in their Abominations.

And now, suppose it to lie entirely within the Compass of the Sinner's own Power, and Will, to save himself, i. e. supposing that the Sinner could believe in Christ, and forsake his Sins, and lead a new Life, when he pleased, yet, since there is this very great Disagreement between the Temper of his Heart, and the Nature, and Way, of Salvation, it follows that it must needs be exceeding difficult, yea, one of the hardest Things in the World, for him to be saved, and that the Sinner had need to stir up his Strength, and exert his Power, to overcome this Difficulty. For how shall he be able to go against the Grain, and Bent, of corrupt Nature, without striving for it? What Strength must he put forth to swim against so powerful a Current? Till his Heart is changed, and the corrupt Bias of his Mind is altered, it is impossible to him to be saved, because of his own natural Aversions to Goodness, and strong Propensity to Evil. But what Pains must he take, what Agonies must he endure, to alter, and change, his vicious Heart, and Affections? Verily, this is a Matter of exceeding great Difficulty, and therefore the Sinner had need to be more than ordinary diligent, and laborious, both in the Concern of his Mind, and his active Pains, to subdue the corrupt Workings of his own Heart, and to watch, and strive against, that he may gain the Mastery over Sin, and embrace all Opportunities, and Encouragements, to his Duty.

But then, it doth not lye wholly within the Sinner's Power to ſave himſelf, and that becauſe Nature cannot go contrary to itſelf. The Tree that has ſtood long bent one Way, cannot unbend itſelf: no more can corrupt Nature alter itſelf, and of crooked, make itſelf ſtraight, of vicious, and depraved, make itſelf holy, righteous, and good. In what Way, by what Means, that are level to the Sinner's own Ability, can he change his own Heart? The *Ethiopian* may as well *change his Skin*, or the *Leopard his Spots*, as they that are *accuſtomed to do Evil*, may, by any Power of their own, *learn to do well*. It is an inſuperable Difficulty to the Man himſelf, and what he will never be able to maſter, without the ſupernatural Aids of the omnipotent *Spirit* of God, which only can convert the Heart of a Sinner; which *Spirit* is to be obtained by an earneſt, and diligent ſeeking of it, in the Ways which God hath appointed. So that, when the Sinner has done all that he can, by any Strength of his own, towards his own Salvation, the Difficulty, of being ſaved, will remain ſo great upon him, that unleſs God, by his almighty *Spirit*, turn, and draw, him unto Chriſt, he never will be converted, and ſaved. Hence is that of the *Prophet*, Jer. xxxi. 18. *Turn thou me, and I ſhall be turned.* q. d. Thou, O Lord, only art able to turn me, and if thou turn me not, I ſhall not be turned. Therefore to all his other Care, and Pains, the Sinner had need to add his daily, fervent, unwearied Supplications to the God of all Grace, for the Preſence, and ſpecial Operation of the *Divine Spirit*, that while he is diligently attempting, in God's Way, *to work out his own Salvation, with Fear, and Trembling*, it would pleaſe God, of his infinite Grace, *to work in him to will, and to do.*

2. The World the Sinner liveth in, and neceſſarily converſeth with, renders it very difficult for him to be ſaved. As the World, and the Things

of

of it, have an eaſy Acceſs to us, ſtrike us directly, and are preſent with us, ſo they fill our Minds, clap an heavy Bias upon them, and turn them aſide from ſpiritual, and heavenly Objects; and this renders it very difficult for the Sinner to hearken to the Inſtructions of Wiſdom, and duely regard his Soul, becauſe the conſtant Clamors of the Senſes, and the mighty Force ſenſible Objects have upon him, draw him another Way.

Thus, the very Buſineſſes of the World, which Men are neceſſarily, in ſome Meaſure, engaged in, for the Support, and allowed Comfort, of their Bodies, and to provide for their Families, to fence againſt Hunger, and Nakedneſs, and Cold, and Want, often prove a very great Interruption, and Hindrance, to the Sinner in regarding his ſpiritual Intereſt, as perhaps, otherwiſe he would do. The Cares about his preſent Circumſtances, the conſtant Hurry he is kept in, his deep Concern to manage ſuch an Affair to his beſt Advantage, or by what means to extricate himſelf from ſuch an Embarraſsment, theſe, with many other ſuch like Affairs relating to the Body, are very prone to engroſs all the Man's Thoughts, and Time, and ſo put him upon turning a deaf Ear to the Calls of Chriſt, to come to him, and accept his offered Salvation. It may be, he will give the Word a hearing, and ſo the good Seed is ſown, but it falleth upon thorny Ground, where *the Cares of the World, and the Deceitfulneſs of Riches, choke the Word.* Matth. xiii. 22. This our *Saviour* elegantly illuſtrates in the Parable of the Marriage Supper, wherein, after he acquaints us that the great King had prepared his Dinner, killed his Oxen, and Fatlings, and made all Tnings ready, and ſent his Servants to call in thoſe that were bidden; he tells us of the baſe Treatment he met with, viz. *they all, with one Conſent, began to make Excuſe*; and why? the World, the World, called them an

other Way: One pleads, *I have bought a Piece of Ground, and I muſt needs go and ſee it*; an other urges, *I have bought five Yoke of Oxen, and I go to prove them*; a third cries, *I have married a Wife, and therefore I cannot come*: So, *they made light of it, and went their Ways, one to his Farm, and another to his Merchandiſe*, Matth. xxii. 5. and Luk. xiv. 18.

Eaſy Circumſtances inſenſibly ſink the Mind into a State of Indolence, and preſent Fulneſs very much takes off the Mind from a due Concern about Futurity. He that walloweth in preſent Pleaſures is in Danger to be ſwallowed up by them, ſo as to looſe all Thoughts of any Thing beyond them. What pleaſes us powerfully attracts us; it approaches, and attacks us on our weak ſide, (being naturally inclined to think well of ourſelves,) and therefore eaſily ſubdueth us, and hurries us away. All that is in the World is Luſt, adapted to Luſt, and ſerves to enflame it; our Covetouſneſs, while the Objects are at a Diſtance from us; our Pride and Wantonneſs, our Luxury, and Paſſions, when we enjoy them; and becauſe all tends to excite, and nouriſh Luſt, therefore the ſerious Thoughts of God, and Religion, and the Salvation of their own Souls, ſeldom, or ever, can find a Welcome with Sinners. 1 Tim. vi. 9. *They that will be rich, fall into Temptation, and a Snare, and into many fooliſh, and hurtful Luſts, which drown Men in Deſtruction, and Perdition.* When a certain young Noble-man came to Chriſt, ſeemingly very deſirous to know what he muſt do to inherit eternal Life, our Lord, to make Trval of the Sincerity of his Deſires, by his willingneſs to part with Earth, that he might gain Heaven, directed him to ſell all that he had, and give to the Poor, and he ſhould have Treaſure in Heaven; but he, being unwilling to purchaſe Heaven, at ſo dear a Rate, went away ſorrowful, for he was very rich; whereupon Chriſt obſerved

observed to his Disciples, Luk. xviii. 24, 25. *How hardly shall they that have Riches enter into the Kingdom of God? It is easier for a Camel to go thro' the Eye of a Needle, than for a Rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of God.* The Design of which was to shew, not the Impossibility, but, how exceeding difficult, the Delights of the present Life, render it, for a wealthy Sinner to be saved.

And who can stand before Envy? or encounter with Hardships, and manifold Tribulation, without being put to Pain, and Uneasiness? The Frowns, and Terrors, of the World lye in the Way, and often prove an Impediment to the Sinner's Salvation. These look with a threatening Aspect upon him, and he can't bear the Thoughts of Self-Denial, and taking up the Cross, and enduring the Heat, and Burden of the Day. To suffer for Religion, in the Cause of God, and for Righteousness Sake! Oh! how irksome, and grievous, is the very Thought of it to a carnal Heart? He can't bear to be poor, and low, and despised, and therefore will not stick at any Thing to avoid these Inconveniencies. Like the unjust Steward, he cries, Luke xvi. 3. *Dig I cannot, to beg I am ashamed.* How many have there been, who once made some fair Shew of setting out in the Ways of Religion, they began to bethink themselves what they must do to be saved, they applied themselves to the Practice of many Duties, but, alas! the Sun beat upon them, a little Tribulation, and Persecution, the Hardships of the Way, and the Scorn of Fools, has offended them; they were soon discouraged, and shrunk back, for Fear of meeting the Lion, and the Bear, in their Way; and all their good Purposes have come to nothing. So many of the professed Disciples of Christ were offended at the Prospect of the Sufferings, which he faithfully warned them of; *This is an hard Saying*, (say they)

they) *and who can bear it? and, from that Time, they went Backward, and walked no more with him.* Joh. vi. 60, 66. Thus the Sufferings of the preſent Time offend Men, and diſcourage them from walking in the Way that leadeth unto Life; and ſo for Fear of expoſing themſelves to Hardſhips, Sinners neglect the Salvation of their Souls.

(3.) The malicious Devices of the Devil add to the Difficulty of the Sinner's being ſaved. Sinners had need to be very ſerious and ſolicitous about their Salvation, becauſe Satan, the grand Adverſary, prompted thereto by his innate Malice, and Envy, makes Uſe of his utmoſt Skill, and Power, to interrupt, and hinder them, in their Thoughtfulneſs, and Labours, about the great Concerns of their Souls. Hence is that Caution of the *Apoſtle*, 1 Pet. v. 8. *Be ſober, be vigilant,* (be very ſolicitous, and watchful,) *becauſe your Adverſary, the Devil, as a roaring Lion, walketh about ſeeking whom he may devour.* The ſubtle Devil maketh Uſe of all Artifice, and Cunning, to direct the Mind of the Sinner from thinking ſeriouſly what he muſt do to be ſaved; and ſometimes by the Hurry of the World, otherwhile by Company, and carnal Pleaſures; ſometimes by perſwading him, that there is no Need of all this Ado, and Strictneſs, in Religion; one while ſuggeſting to him, that he is Young, and has many Days to come, and it will be Time enough for him, to think of being ſerious, and religious, hereafter, when he draws to the Cloſe of his Life; an otherwhile, he tells him, that it is now too late for him to think of altering his Courſe, he has no Time for it, nor would it be of any Advantage to him to labour about it, becauſe the Seaſon is over, and gone, with Reſpect to him; ſo does he try all Methods, that, by any Means, he may take Sinners off from a due Application of Mind to that which truly is their great and main Buſineſs. Thus he uſeth his beſt Endeavours

deavours to enſlave them more and more under Bondage unto Sin, and to hinder their Repentance, and Converſion, and Faith in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; as well-knowing, if once their ſerious Thoughtfulneſs ſhould be productive of theſe Things in them, that then he ſhould loſe ſo many of his Subjects, and no longer have the Pleaſure of tyranniſing over them. Therefore he throws out his Lure, to enſnare, and entangle them; therefore he baits his Hook with very bright, and ſhining Appearances; therefore he turneth himſelf into all Manner of Shapes, and accommodateth himſelf unto all Tempers, and Conſtitutions, and ſuiteth himſelf to every Buſineſs, and Employment, and windeth himſelf into every State, and Condition, that, if poſſible, he may ſtill hold the Soul his Vaſſal, and lead it captive at his Will. And what Need is there then, of Circumſpection, and Watchfulneſs, of ſerious Thought, and Application of Mind, of diligent Labour, and Pains, to overcome his Temptations, and diſappoint his Deſigns, that the poor Soul may eſcape, as a Bird, out of the Snare of the Fowler, and may flee away, and be at Reſt.

From all of which, it appeareth, how exceeding difficult it is for a poor periſhing Sinner to be ſaved. Sin, and Luſt, within him, and the World, and Devil, without him, all conſpire to oppoſe his Salvation; and becauſe it is thus an hard, and difficult Matter, to get ſafe to Heaven, from the many, and powerful Enemies, which lie in the Way, and muſt be firſt ſubdued, therefore the poor Sinner had Need, if he would be ſaved, to exert himſelf to the utmoſt, and daily, yea, hourly, look about him, and within himſelf, that he may timouſly ſpy out the riſing Danger, and ward it off, and be active, and unwearied, firm, and unſhaken, in his Reſolutions, and Endeavours, to maſter theſe Difficulties, and ſave his own Soul. For great Difficulties will not be overcome without great Care and Labour. So much for the preſent. SER-

SERMON XX.

ACTS XVI. 30.

And ſaid, Sirs, What muſt I do to be ſaved?

I Shewed you, in the Morning the Reaſonableneſs that every Sinner ſhould be moſt ſeriouſly ſolicitous to be ſaved; becauſe it is of all Concernments the greateſt; and it is a Matter of exceeding great Difficulty, to get ſafe to Heaven, from the Corruption of our own Hearts, the World we live in, and the Malice of the Devil. I now proceed to argue,

3. After all the Attempts of many, and the Endeavours they may uſe, there are but few that ſhall be ſaved at laſt; and this ſerveth farther to ſhew, what Need the periſhing Sinner has to be very ſolicitous, and in Earneſt, that he may be found in the Number of thoſe happy few. Tho' the Number of them that ſhall be ſaved, conſidered abſolutely, and by themſelves, will be found, at laſt, to be *a great Multitude, which no Man can Number*, Rev. vii. 9. whom Chriſt hath redeemed, by his Blood, out of every Kindred, and Tongue, and People, and Nation, in all Ages, and Places, of the World;

World; yet, comparatively considered, they are but a small Company, as the Gleaning of Grapes, and as the Shaking of an Olive Tree, when there are left two or three Berries in the Top of the uppermost Boughs, four or five in the outmost fruitful Branches thereof; so is the Remnant according to the Election of Grace, a small Company, a little Flock, chosen, and few. Hence our blessed Lord said to his Disciples, Luk. xii. 32. *Fear not little Flock, it is your Father's good Pleasure, to give you the Kingdom.*

The greatest Part of the World have not the Gospel of Salvation preached to them; they never heard of Jesus Christ a Saviour from Sin, and Wrath; and thus they are destitute, and have been so through all Ages, of a Light to guide their Feet into the Way of Peace, as well as of any Sacrifice of Atonement, that they know of, sufficient to take away Sin. And supposing that every Age should have produced, which it has not, in the unenlightened World, a *Plato*, a *Socrates*, an *Epictetus*, Men that endeavoured to search out the Truth, and discover their Duty, as far as the Strength of natural Light would assist them, and carefully practised according to the Discoveries which they made, yet what are they to the Bulk of the heathen World, that neither knew their Duty, nor did according to what they knew.

As for those who have been advantaged with the Light of the Gospel and who have made Profession of the *Christian Religion*, it is to be feared, if we take a View of their Lives, that the most of them, by far, will come short of Salvation. How many Nations of them are vile Idolaters, worshiping the Beast, and his Image? And what vast Numbers in the Protestant Nations openly live profane, vicious, and immoral Lives? Christ

said,

ſaid, Matth. xx. 16. *many be called, but few choſen.* Many enjoy the external Call of the Goſpel; Chriſt, and Salvation, are preached to them, but there are but few that are effectually called, and choſen, but few who ſincerely embrace the Offers of the Goſpel, and obtain Salvation. There are but few real Penitents, but few true Believers, but few ſincere Converts, even among the many Profeſſors of the pure Religion of Jeſus. As for a great Part of them that are numbered among *Chriſtians*, alaſs! it is too apparent that they are nothing at all concerned about the Salvation of their Souls; they ſcarce entertain ſo much as one ſerious Thought in their Hearts about it, from Day to Day, nay, it may be, from Year to Year; their Minds are wholly taken up about other Things, though of infinitely leſs Worth, and Moment; they are inquiſitive enough what they ſhall do to live, in this World; they are very ſolicitous that they may grow rich, and great, and make to themſelves a Name, and a Family, in the Earth; but the Salvation of their Souls, what they ſhall do to pleaſe God, to eſcape Hell, and get to Heaven, theſe are the leaſt of their Concerns. If their natural Life be in Danger by Sickneſs, they will readily cry out, *what ſhall I do?* They will enquire of every Neighbour, and ſend for a skilful Phyſician, to direct them what to do, and be ready to follow the Directions that are preſcribed to them: but when did you ever hear them ſeriouſly enquire of their pious Neighbour the Way to Heaven? When do you know them apply themſelves to the Miniſters of the Lord, whom he has appointed as ſpiritual Phyſicians, to miniſter to their Souls? When do they go to them with that important Enquiry, *What muſt we do to be ſaved?* Poſſibly, if their Miniſter be a Man of great Learning, and Prudence, and thorow Acquaintance with the Circumſtances of the

the World, and the Manners of Men, they may ſometimes go to him for Advice in ſome difficult temporal Affairs, but when do they go to him for Direction in their ſpiritual Concerns, which it more ſpecially belongeth to his Office to be helpful to them in, and in which they more ſtand in Need of his Aſſiſtance, and Counſel. *Paul*, and *Silas*, may preach to them Year after Year, and allure them with all the Charms of the Goſpel, and ſet before them the Terrors of the Law, and woo them with all the Art of Perſwaſion, and yet they remain as in a dead Sleep, and are not awakened to any Senſe of their Danger, nor cry out, *Sirs, what muſt we do to be ſaved?*

Yea, among thoſe that ſeem to be ſomewhat concerned about the Salvation of their Souls, how exceeding negligent, and careleſs, are many of them? They will not be at any great Coſt, and Pains, about it; they don't appear to be in Earneſt, and engage with any great Warmth, and Heat, of Spirit, after it; they regard it, rather, only as a Matter by the By, which they would ſhew ſome Reſpect to, for Forms Sake, when they have little, or nothing, elſe to do; and hence they, at laſt, miſs of Salvation, becauſe of their Indolence, and Negligence, about it. If they were but as much in Earneſt, and took as much Pains to ſave their Souls; if they were but as zealous in the Service of God, and to get an Intereſt in Chriſt, and a Portion in Heaven, as they are to get the World, or to gratify ſome ſordid Luſt, or other, very probably they might be ſaved: but, alaſs! they only entertain ſome few, ſlighty, tranſient Thoughts about it, and do not much concern themſelves, what their future Condition ſhall be, ſo they may but be eaſy, and comfortable, for the preſent: and by this Means it is that many, very many, Sinners come ſhort of that eternal Salvation, which, probably, they hoped

for.

for. When one ſaid to our Lord, Luk. xiii. 23. *Are there few that ſhall be ſaved?* Our Saviour, without directly gratifying his vain Curioſity, gave ſuch an Anſwer to the Enquiry, as ſhewed him the Neceſſity of his own, perſonal, zealous Endeavours, that he might be one of that happy Number; becauſe there are many that finally miſs of the Good they hoped for, from their ſupine Negligence, in not taking the proper Pains to obtain it; ſaid he, ℣. 24. *Strive to enter in at the ſtrait Gate; for many, I ſay unto you, ſhall ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able.* As if he had ſaid, do you ſtrive, do you be in Earneſt, and induſtriouſly lay yourſelf out, in this great, and important Affair, becauſe there are many, who will miſcarry in their Attempts, to get to Heaven, through their own Negligence; though they ſeek to enter in, are deſirous of it, and willing to do ſomething, yet they ſeek it only in a very careleſs, off-handed Manner, and are not in Earneſt in what they do. And this, indeed, is that which proveth the Deſtruction of the greateſt Part, by far, of thoſe that periſh from under the Goſpel; they have ſome Thoughts about the Salvation of their Souls, but they treat it as though it were but a very ſmall, and indifferent Matter, and are ſlothful, and inactive, and will not give themſelves any great Trouble to ſecure it, and ſo they fall ſhort of the Reſt, which remaineth for the People of God.

A very great Part, of thoſe that hope to be ſaved, ground their Hopes upon a falſe Bottom, upon ſome very great Miſtake, or other, which at laſt, deceives them, and cuts off all their Expectation. Thus, ſome are ready to imagine, that a little external Service, bodily Exerciſe, and Lip-Labour, in ſaying their Prayers, and now and then reading, and hearing the Word of God, will ſerve the Turn well enough, and with this they content, and

ſatisfy

ſatisfy themſelves, ſuppoſing that they ſhall be accepted for what they do. There are others, that think all the Qualifications for Heaven are to be found in Benevolence, and Charity, and therefore they will be ſure to wrong no Man, and endeavour to be good, and kind, in their Speech, and Actions, to all about them; while they have no Reverence for their Maker, call not upon his Name, nor regard his Worſhip. Others are the Reverſe of theſe, and conclude all Religion lyeth in external Acts of Worſhip, and all they have to do is to be careful not to profane the Name of God, to obſerve divine Appointments; theſe, they think, will ſave them, though they have no Regard to their Neighbour's good Name, nor make any Difficulty of wronging him, when they can do it with ſafety from the Reſentments of human Laws. There are ſome that will invent many Excuſes, and find out divers Pleas, for their Continuance in their Sins, and fooliſhly ſuppoſe, thoſe Pleas will be as available with the holy God, as they are ſatisfactory unto themſelves. Others, again, fly to the Mercy of God, and Merits of Chriſt, and if they can but confidently believe Chriſt has dyed for them, and that God for Chriſt's ſake has pardoned all their Sins, they conclude their Salvation is ſure, though they have nothing of good Works to prove the Truth of their Faith, and without their making ſo much ado, as ſometimes their Miniſters tell them is neceſſary, about their being holy in all Manner of Converſation. And how many are there that ſhelter themſelves under their Impotency? They cry, they are poor Creatures, they do what they can, they ſay, and leave it wholly with God to do all for them; and, at the ſame Time, will be at no Pains with themſelves, to forſake their Sins, and to lead a new, and holy Life. Thus there are innumerable that delude themſelves with fooliſh Imaginations, and vain

Hopes, and idle Excuſes, in their careleſs Neglect of their Duty, till, at laſt, they find themſelves ſadly miſtaken, and ſo periſh forever. So that notwithſtanding the great Number of Profeſſors, there are but few that ſhall be ſaved. To which Purpoſe the Apoſtle *Paul*, in alluſion to a Paſſage in the Prophet *Iſaiah*, ſaid, Rom. ix. 27. *Though the Number of the Children of Iſrael be as the Sand of the Sea*, yet only, *a Remnant ſhall be ſaved.*

Since therefore the Number, of them that ſhall be ſaved, will be but ſmall, a few only, of Mankind in General, and from among Profeſſors in Particular, this ſhews us what Reaſon there is that every periſhing Sinner ſhould be exceeding ſolicitous, inquiſitive, and diligent, that he may not be found among the common Herd, the wandering Drove, who deceive themſelves, miſtake their Way, and finally lye down in Sorrow; but may be numbered among thoſe happy few, who are led by the divine Spirit in Paths of Righteouſneſs, and ſhall, at the Concluſion of their preſent Life, arrive at the End of their Faith, the Salvation of their Souls.

Were Salvation common unto all Men, without any Difference between them, let their own Conduct, and Behaviour, be what it would, then, indeed, there would be leſs Cauſe for any Man to be in great Concern of Mind about it; becauſe every Man might, without any great Hazard, reaſonably expect to have his Share, with his Neighbours, in what is common to all Mankind, whether he be at any ſpecial Care, and Pains, about it, or no. But ſince there are only a few that ſhall be ſaved, a ſmall Number, out of the many that hope to get to Heaven, that will be duly qualified to arrive at the upper Manſions of Light and Joy; ſeeing the Multitude are going in the Way that leadeth to Deſtruction, and many, who ſeem to ſet out fair, and do many Things, yet, after all, will be found to have deceived themſelves with a vain

Preſumption,

Presumption, and really miss of that Happiness, which they dreamt of possessing, and perish in their Sins; what full Conviction hast thou! O Sinner! from hence, of the great Reasonableness of thy *giving all Diligence to make thy Calling, and Election sure*? that thou shouldest be in the greatest Concern imaginable, apply thyself hereunto in good Earnest, set thy very Heart to these Things, and use all possible Pains with thyself, in a wise Improvement of the best Means, and prudent husbanding the favourable Opportunities, to make thy Peace with God, and secure a Title to the future Happiness? lest, through thy Carelessness, thou, even thou, O Sinner, shouldest be carried down in the common Current, and have thy Portion with the Multitude, and lose thy Soul, and perish forever. How earnestly would'st thou strive to be one of the ten, that out of an Hundred, should by a wise Forecast, in improving present Opportunities, procure to thyself a Noble-man's Estate? And how much more highly, then, does it concern thee to endeavour, by all means, (which, by the Way, are more certain, and successful,) that thou mayest be one of that small Number, who shall possess a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away.

4. *Lastly*; Every one that shall be saved will be most seriously solicitous about it. Sometime or other, first or last, this Solicitude of Mind will take Hold on all that ever are, or shall be recovered from the Paths of the Destroyer, and turned into the Ways of Peace, and Life. This Solicitude, and Concernment, of Mind, are the Pangs of the New Birth, through which the Soul passes, in it's being born an Heir of Salvation; so that he never will, he never can, be saved, at least in the ordinary Method of God's bringing a Soul home unto himself, who is not first seriously thought-

ful, and concerned, to know, and practiſe, all that is neceſſary to his Salvation.

1. All that have been ſaved, have been ſaved in this Way. To which of the Saints wilt thou turn? They will all tell thee, they have been firſt awakened to ſome Senſe of their own miſerable Condition, of the Neceſſity of Salvation, and a Thoughtfulneſs what they muſt do in order to it; and have been brought to a willingneſs to attend their Duty, and do whatſoever they have been convinced that God required of them, to obtain his Favour. Though this Concern of Mind has been infinitely various in the Degrees of it, yet none have been able, regularly, to lay Claim to the promiſed Bleſſedneſs, who have not, more or leſs, had ſome Experience of it. Thus the *Jaylor* cryed out, *Sirs, what muſt I do to be ſaved?* And thus it was with the Hearers of *John the Baptiſt*; when he had ſet the Terrors of the Lord before them, ſaying to them, Luk. iii. 7. *O Generation of Vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the Wrath to come?* we are told, that the People asked him, ſaying, *Maſter what ſhall we do?* Yea, the *Publicans*, thoſe noted Sinners, came unto him with the ſame important Enquiry, ſaying, *Maſter, what ſhall we do?* And the very Soldiers, that lawleſs Generation of Men, felt the Power of his awakening Doctrine, and, with Concern of Mind, *demand of him, ſaying, and what ſhall we do?* They all ſeem to have been filled with a very great Concern about the Salvation of their Souls, and were very inquiſitive to know what they muſt do, and willing to do all that he ſhould Acquaint them with as neceſſary to be done by them, that they might eſcape the tremendous Wrath which he had warned them of, and might obtain a State of compleat, and endleſs Happineſs. Thus alſo it was with the numerous Converts, which, out of many Nations, were proſelyted to the *Chriſtian*

Faith,

Faith, and Manners, at the Preaching of *Peter*, in the Time of *Pentecoſt*: it is ſaid, Act. ii. 37. *When they heard this, they were pricked in their Hearts, and ſaid to Peter, and to the Reſt of the Apoſtles, Men, and Brethren, what ſhall we do?* The Manner of the Expreſſion, as well as the Account given of them, that they were *pricked in their Hearts*, ſhew that they were in very great Concern what to do, to eſcape the Miſery which, they were then ſenſible, they were expoſed unto, and obtain that Salvation which Jeſus Chriſt had purchaſed, by dying for Sinners; and this their Concern made them in Earneſt in their Enquiry after the Way of Salvation, and willing to ſubmit themſelves to any proper Methods of obtaining it. Thus alſo it was with *Paul* himſelf, at his firſt Converſion. The Lord Jeſus, in an unuſual Manner, met that little *Benjamite*, when he was ravening as a Wolf to devour the Flock of Chriſt, and ſtop'd him in the midſt of his Rage, by a ſurpriſing Light from Heaven, out ſhining the Sun at noon Day, and by an audible Voice, from the excellent Glory, ſaid to him, *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me!* and then it is remarked of him, Act. ix. 6. *He trembling, and aſtoniſhed, ſaid, Lord! What wilt thou have me to do?* So that the Converſion of the Sinner, whatever extraordinary Circumſtances may attend it, is brought about in this Way, of applying to his rational Mind, and awakening in him a ſerious Concern about his own eternal Welfare, and diſpoſing of him to a Willingneſs to ſubmit to the Counſels of Heaven; and though many, that hear the Goſpel preached, may be ſtrongly prejudiced againſt the Methods God has preſcribed, and with *Naaman*, the *Syrian*, turn away in a Rage, and ſay, 2 King. v. 12. *Are not Abana, and Pharpar, Rivers of Damaſcus, better than all the Waters of Iſrael? may I not waſh in them, and be clean?* yet, if ever they truly waſh, and be clean, if ever they

become real Converts, they will be brought to a Senſe of it, that God's Way is the beſt, and be made willing to comply with it.

2. And indeed, it is highly reaſonable that it ſhould be ſo; that every one, that would be ſaved, ſhould be ſeriouſly ſolicitous about it. Who can ſuppoſe the ſtrait Gate of Regeneration can be paſſed without ſtriving? However the Pangs of the New Birth may be ſtronger, more dolorous, and laſting, in ſome, than in others, yet, who can, in Reaſon, imagine that any Man will, or can, be happy, who is not firſt deſirous to be ſo, and willing to put himſelf to ſome preſent Trouble that he may be ſo? that is, he muſt experience ſomething of a painful Concern of Mind, about his Soul, and his eternal State, how he ſhall eſcape the Wrath and Curſe of God, and what he ſhall do to inherit eternal Life, before he ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

For, every ſincere Convert muſt experience ſomething of the Conviction of Sin. The *Spirit* of the Lord, like a *Spirit of Judgment, and Burning*, muſt awaken the Sinner to a Senſe of the Sinfulneſs of Sin, and his own Sinfulneſs, or how ſhall he convert and turn from his Evil Ways? Though he has, heretofore, entertained ever ſo fond an Opinion of Sin, as very delightful, and pleaſurable to him, yet, every true Convert muſt be brought to a Conviction of the Evil of Sin, that it is the moſt hateful, loathſome Thing that can be, both in the Nature of it, as contrary to God, and in the Conſequents of it, as hurtful to himſelf; or how ſhall he part with what he has delighted in? Though he was once opinionated of himſelf, could wipe his Mouth, and ſay, I have done no Evil, in living in the Gratification of the fleſhly Appetites; I have but followed Nature, and done no harm: Yet when ever he is brought to a Senſe of his Duty, he will then ſee his own paſt Sinfulneſs;

when

when the Commandment came, Sin revived; Rom. vii. 9. when the Commandment, the Rule of Duty, in its holy Nature, and Extent, appears before him, (as it muſt before he can do his Duty,) then he will ſee his own Defects, what a vile, wretched, guilty, polluted Creature he has been; that tho' he may have lived an inoffenſive Life among Men, yet, that the holy God ſeeth Sin enough in him to damn him to the loweſt Hell, if he ſhould be ſtrict to mark his Iniquity againſt him. This Conviction of Sin is abſolutely neceſſary to the Sinner's turning from it, and his turning from Sin is abſolutely neceſſary to his Salvation; for no Man will, or can, repent of that which he does not think to be Evil, or, of what he looketh upon himſelf to be clear of: and if he be thorowly convinced of the Evil of the Way he hath lived in, it will excite a Concern to alter his Courſe. Eſpecially,

If we conſider, that a Conviction of Miſery felt, or impending, produces a Concern to be delivered from it. It is but reaſonable that a Man be firſt apprehenſive of his Unhappineſs, or Danger, before we can ſuppoſe him to fly from it. He that, like *Paul*, *once thought himſelf alive*, knowing no Hurt, or Danger attending him, *without the Law*, while he remained a Stranger to the Law, and it's Sanctions, when *the Commandment cometh*, and appeareth in it's full Latitude before him, will ſee *Sin revive*, in the Treſpaſſes of the Law he has been guilty of, and then he will alſo ſee *himſelf Dead*, under the Sentence of Death which the Law paſſeth upon him. And the thorow Apprehenſion the Soul has of the Wrath of an Angry, and almighty God hanging over it, and juſt ready to fall upon it's guilty Head; the Apprehenſion, that there is but a Step between him and Death, and eternal Damnation; that the grim Bayliff ſtands ready to ſeize him, and hurry him away into the

infernal Priſon; that Hell from beneath is gaping for him; and grinning Devils, as the Executioners of Divine Vengeance, are waiting to plunge him into the burning Vault, the Place of Torment, and everlaſting Diſpair; the Apprehenſion, I ſay, of this deplorable Condition, and the utmoſt Danger the Soul is in of periſhing forever, ſhould, and will, in all Reaſon, produce a Solicitude, and Concern of Mind, to know, in what Way, by what Means, it may be poſſible for him to eſcape from this dreadful Miſery, that is impending over him.

To all which add; The Senſe of the Mercy of God, in Chriſt, gives Encouragement, and Excitement, to the Soul, to beſtir itſelf, and do all that is neceſſary to be done, that it may be ſaved. The Conviction, and full Perſwaſion, of the infinite Mercy of God, through Chriſt, the Goſpel revealeth, giveth abundant Encouragement to the awakened Sinner, to hope, that, notwithſtanding all his former, multiplyed, and greatly aggravated Sins, there is a Poſſibility of his obtaining the Pardon of all, and ſo of his eſcaping that terrible Wrath, and Vengeance, which he had deſerved, and ſecuring the Bleſſing which he wanteth; and this leadeth him, with Earneſtneſs of Soul, to ſeek the offered Mercy, in the Way of God's Appointment; without which Encouragement he would diſpair, and periſh. Seeing that the Lord is a merciful God, who taketh no Pleaſure in the Death of the Wicked, but is ready to forgive Iniquity, Tranſgreſſion, and Sin, and to receive into the Arms of his everlaſting Lovingkindneſs, every true Penitent, the Sinner is hereby excited to cry out, with Earneſtneſs of Soul, as the *Jaylor* did, *what muſt I do to be ſaved?* Thus it has been, more or leſs, with every Convert, and infinitely reaſonable is it that it ſhould be ſo. So the returning *Prodigal*, when he came to himſelf, ſaid,

Luk.

Luk. xv. 17, 18. *How many hired Servants of my Father, have Bread enough, and to ſpare? and I periſh with Hunger! I will ariſe, and go to my Father.* &c.

Now, this being the natural, and certain Frame, and Temper, of Mind, which every one, that ſhall be ſaved, has, firſt or laſt, produced in him, to have his Thoughts greatly taken up with, and his Labour, and Pains, very much employed about, the important Concern of the Salvation of his Soul, therefore, if thou, O Sinner, wouldſt be ſaved, thou alſo muſt be thus ſolicitous, and careful, about thy own Soul, and not ſuffer it's main Intereſts to lie neglected, or to be regarded by thee only, as if it were a Matter of the greateſt Indifference to thee, whether thou art ſaved, or damned. For how can you expect, that God ſhould go out of his ordinary Method to ſave thee, when thou wilt not be at the ordinary Pains to ſave thyſelf? Or, can you reaſonably depend upon being ſaved, in a Way that is foreign to your rational Nature? No; verily, you may not. If then, you would be ſaved in God's Way, in a Way ſuited to your Nature, and Capacity, it muſt be by your being awakened unto a deep Senſe of your Sin, and Miſery, and the Mercy of God, in Chriſt, and a very great Solicitude of Mind, to be delivered from the Wrath to come, and to obtain the promiſed Mercy of God unto eternal Life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

Thus I have ſhewed you the Reaſons, why Sinners ſhould be very ſolicitous what they muſt do to be ſaved; namely, becauſe it is of all Concernments the greateſt, and therefore deſerveth your beſt Thought, and Care: and it is a Matter of exceeding great Difficulty for the Soul to be recovered from the Power of the Fleſh, the World, and the Devil, and therefore it ſo much the more requireth your deep Thought, and intenſe Labour, to overcome the Difficulty: and, after all, there

are

are but very few that ſhall be ſaved, the greateſt Part of Mankind, through their Ignorance, and Folly, their Wickedneſs, and Negligence, come ſhort home, and therefore there is the more Need for you to be cautious, and diligent, that you may be of the happy few: and all that are, and ſhall be ſaved, have been, and will be, truly ſolicitous in their Concern about it, and therefore, if you would be aſſociated with them, in the Reward, you muſt join with them, in the Labour; if you would come to their happy End, you muſt walk in the Way with them.

And ſo I have gone through the doctrinal Handling of my Text, and ſhewed you, at ſeveral Times, what that Salvation is which periſhing Sinners ſtand in Need of, that it more ſpecially intends in it the Salvation of the Soul, conſiſting, in a Deliverance from all that Evil of Sin, and Suffering, which it is ſubject to, and in the full Supply of it's Wants, with ſpiritual, and eternal good Things; That periſhing Sinners, after all their Unworthineſs, may yet, poſſibly, through the Mercy of God, and Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, obtain Salvation; That, in order to their being ſaved, they muſt know their Duty, and carefully practiſe it, by living a Life of Faith, and Repentance; and that, Salvation being a Matter of the greateſt Importance, it requireth your greateſt Solicitude, Care, and Labour, to ſecure an Intereſt in it.

I ſhall now conclude the preſent Diſcourſe with a few brief Reflections upon what has been offered; and leave the larger Application of the whole to an other Time, God willing.

USE. 1. From hence it appears how greatly they are miſtaken, who think that it is a very eaſy Matter to be ſaved. There are many Perſons who imagine, there is no great Difficulty, in getting to Heaven; the Way is all ſmooth, and eaſy, in their Apprehenſion, as though they could ride

thither

thither in their Coaches, or be carried there in their Feather-Beds: They flatter themſelves that there needeth not to be all this Ado about Faith, and Repentance, and there is no Neceſſity of their being ſo very careful, and circumſpect in their Walk. What! ſhall we think, (ſay they,) that God is an arbitrary, tyrannical, and cruel Maſter, to exact ſo ſeverely at our Hands? No; no; He is the beſt of Beings, and will be more eaſily pleaſed than ſome moroſe People think for, who tell us we muſt be ſo careful, and obſervant; they think, and they doubt not, but, they may ſave themſelves without all this Pains. So many think, it is enough to believe as the Church believeth; and if they have done any Thing amiſs, it is but confeſſing their Sins to the Prieſt, and paying a ſmall Matter for his Abſolution, and all will be well with them. And many others are ſo vain as to imagine, they may ſave themſelves, upon much eaſier Terms than their Preachers tell them of; why, (ſay they,) if we go to Church, and ſay our Prayers, and wrong no Body, what can you require more of us.

But let no Man deceive himſelf; if this Doctrine be true, and ſurely it is, then the Salvation of the Soul is a Matter that requireth very great Care, and Solicitude, and there is a great deal of Difficulty attending it. As we would not repreſent the Way to Heaven, to you, eaſier than it is, leſt we ſhould lead you on in a vain Dream of Happineſs, till you are awaked out of it by ſurrounding Flames; ſo neither would we render it more hard, and difficult, to get to Heaven than it is, leſt we ſhould diſcourage you from attempting it, and diſhonour our Lord, by bringing up an evil Report of him, and of his good Land. But then, give us leave to deal plainly, and faithfully, with you, and ſhew you the Way to Heaven as it truly is, not eaſy to the natural Man, but hard,

and

and difficult; however the Path Way thereof is eaſy, and pleaſant, to the renewed Soul. So our Lord himſelf has repreſented it ſaying, Matth. vii. 14. *Strait is the Gate, and narrow is the Way, that leadeth unto Life, and few there be that find it.* It is a ſtrait Gate, ſo that a Man muſt ſtrive, and ſtruggle hard, to get through it; and it is a narrow Way, ſo that if a Man be not careful and circumſpect in his Walk, he will be in Danger of falling down the Precipice, on one Hand, or the other. Many that ſeem to ſet out in this Way, for want of due Care, ſtumble, and fall, and periſh forever. Hearken, my Friend; Is it an eaſy Matter to conflict with, and ſubdue, an Army of inbred Luſts? to deny ourſelves of what is pleaſing to our Senſes, and gratifying to our natural Appetites? Is it eaſy to be continually upon Duty, watching, and warding, againſt the many, powerful, and ſubtle Temptations, ariſing from the Men, and Things, of the World, which we, more or leſs, neceſſarily converſe with, while we are in the Body? Or, is there no Difficulty in combating, not only with Fleſh, and Blood, but, with Principalities, and Powers, and the Rulers of the Darkneſs of this World, and ſpiritual Wickedneſſes in high Places? Surely, they that think it an eaſy Matter to be ſaved, do greatly miſtake the Nature of Salvation, and the Way to it, and it is to be feared have never yet entred into the Path Way thereof: and yet it is eaſy, pleaſant, delightful to the renewed Soul. Hence our Lord, ſaid, Matth. xi. 30. *My Yoke is eaſy, and my Burden is light.*

2. From hence we may learn, the Neceſſity of the ſupernatural Grace of God, in the Converſion, and Salvation, of the Sinner. Since there are ſo many Difficulties lying in the Way of the Sinner's Salvation, and thoſe of ſuch a Nature, Kind, and Degree, as we have ſeen it is very apparent,

parent, that the Sinner is not able to ſurmount them all, by any Strength of his own. Where ſhall he find ſufficient Power, in himſelf, to ſubdue thoſe luſtings unto Sin in him, which already have got the Power, and Dominion, over him? Or how ſhall he be able to bring into Subjection thoſe that have diſarmed him of his Strength, and have already brought him into Bondage? What Might, and Power, purely his own, has he againſt ſo great a Company, as the World, and Devil, muſter againſt him, when he has already one within, that ſideth with them, who waiteth to betray him into their Hands? The infernal Spirit is both too ſubtle, and too powerful for him, in his lapſed State, as we may be well aſſured, ſeeing we know he was an overmatch for Man in Innocency. Since therefore fallen Man is without Strength, and no Ways equal, in himſelf, to the many Difficulties that lie in the Way of his Salvation, it is neceſſary, therefore, that he ſhould be furniſhed with a full Supply of Strength, and Might, from an other, if ever he obtain the Maſtery, and win the Crown, he is to contend for. And from whence ſhall he derive this foreign Aid, ſufficient to overcome the World, and Devil, and Self, the moſt powerful Adverſary, but from that God alone, who only is able, and is graciouſly willing, to help him, and ſtrengthen him with Strength in his Soul? So that, in order to the Sinner's Converſion, and Salvation, there is an abſolute Neceſſity of the ſupernatural Grace of God; that is, ſuch Meaſures of favourable Communications, and Aſſiſtances, from God, to the Soul of the Sinner, as do exceed that natural Strength, and Ability, which belongeth to him, as ſuch a Creature: which ſupernatural, or extraordinary Aſſiſtance from God, every Sinner ſhould humbly, and earneſtly, petition for. Hence the *Apoſtle*, ſpeaking of the Good Man's ſafe Arrival unto the heavenly Habitations, or his being eternally

nally ſaved, ſaid, 2 Cor. v. 5. *Now He, that hath wrought us for the ſelf ſame Thing, is God.* The *ſelf ſame Thing* meaneth what the *Apoſtle* had juſt before ſpoken of, viz. our having an *Houſe eternal in the Heavens*, our *Mortality being ſwallowed up of Life*, that is, the eternal Salvation ſet before us in the Goſpel; *now*, ſays the *Apoſtle, he that hath wrought us for the ſelf ſame Thing*, not hath wrought the ſelf ſame Thing *in us*, but hath wrought *us for* the ſelf ſame Thing, that is, hath by his own mighty Power, and Grace, fitted, and prepared us for Glory, or hath made us meet to partake of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light, *is God*, and not ourſelves.

3. Hence, we may try ourſelves, whether we are in the Way to Salvation, or no. None are, or ſhall be ſaved, but ſuch as are, or have been, ſolicitous about it; nay, even the poor Creature that neglected his main Buſineſs till the laſt Hours of his Life, and yet between the rearing of the Croſs, and his expiring on it, found Mercy; or, *between the Saddle and the Ground*, has obtained a Pardon, has firſt, from a Senſe of his undone Condition, been put upon earneſt ſeeking for Mercy, and Pardon, and Life. And certainly then, they that, upon any good Grounds, would entertain the Hope that they have a fair Claim to the Mercy of God, and would now take the Comfort of it, that they ſhall finally be accepted of him, muſt be able to perceive within themſelves the Sincerity, and Prevalency of their Deſires, and Labours, to obtain it.

Come then, and let us put ourſelves upon the Tryal. Are we in good earneſt to ſave our own Souls? Do we find that this is what our Hearts are ſet upon, and that we cannot be contented without it, that we may be the Heirs of ſo great Salvation? Our *Saviour* has told us, Matth. vi. 21. *Where your Treaſure is, there will your Hearts be alſo.* If the

Salvation

Salvation of our Souls be our chief Treaſure, what we moſt value, and have the greateſt Regard to, (and one would think that we cannot poſſibly propoſe any thing beyond it,) we ſhall certainly have our Hearts much ſet upon it, and ſuffer nothing wholly to divert us from it. Are we, then, more deeply concerned for the Salvation of our Souls, than about any of the Affairs of the Body, and the preſent Life? Have we received ſuch full Conviction of our own Sinfulneſs, and Miſery, as has excited in us the greateſt Care, and Diligence, to know, and do, all that is required of us, that we may ſhun the threatened Evil, and embrace the promiſed Good? Are we ſincerely deſirous to be taught our Duty, and inſtructed in the Way of Life? Are we bro't to an hearty Willingneſs to put our Hands to the Performance of what we diſcern to be the Duty required of us, that we may be ſaved? Does every little Difficulty diſcourage us from minding our ſpiritual Intereſt, and attending upon the Service of God, and our own Souls, when much greater would not be able to prevail upon us to neglect our worldly Buſineſs? Or, do we endeavour reſolutely to break through all Impediments which lye in our Way, and to guard againſt every Thing which we know would be an Hindrance to us, in ſecuring of our great and main Intereſt? Are we reſolved to take the Kingdom of Heaven, and to leave nothing undone, that lyeth within our Power, to force an Admiſſion into that glorious City? Is a Chriſt, with his Croſs, heartily Welcome to us, and can we part with all for him? If we are thus ſeriouſly ſolicitous about our eternal Welfare, then have we the comfortable Tokens that the Things which do accompany Salvation are found upon us; which ſhould encourage us to go on rejoicing, in the good Hope, that he, who hath begun this good Work in us, will perform it unto the Day of Jeſus Chriſt.

4. To

4. To have done; Let it now be the ſerious Care of us all to be found in the Number of the few that ſhall be ſaved. The Conſideration, that there are but few that ſhall be ſaved, ſhould not diſcourage us, and cauſe us to lye down in Deſpair, but ſhould ſerve to ſtir up, and awaken our Powers, and quicken our Diligence, and make us the more earneſt, and laborious, that we may be of that ſmall, but happy, Number. Did the Fewneſs, of thoſe that eſcaped the Deluge, hinder *Noah* from preparing the Ark? Or of thoſe that were ſaved from the devouring Flames of *Sodom*, diſcourage *Lot* from fleeing to *Zoar*? Yea, who is there of us, that, upon the Apprehenſions of a very great Mortality, or a ſudden Earthquake, from the Deſtruction whereof but few of us ſhould eſcape with our Lives, would not be greatly concerned to uſe their beſt Endeavours, that, if poſſible, they might be ſome of the Few, who ſhould have their Lives given them for a Prey? And, O periſhing Sinner! Shall not Deſtruction from the Lord be a Terror to thee? Wilt thou not be willing to be of the Number of the Few, that ſhall be eternally ſaved, when the Generality of Mankind ſhall periſh in the Deluge of Fire, iſſuing from the Wrath of God forever? Wilt thou chooſe to go to Hell for Company's Sake, and becauſe thou ſeeſt ſo many are bound thither? Or cannot you be happy, becauſe others will not? O! hearken to the *Apoſtle*'s Advice, Acts ii. 40. *Save yourſelves from this untoward Generation.*

Let none of us, then, be wanting to ourſelves, and our own Happineſs; but ſtir up ourſelves to take hold on God, to believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, to repent of all our Sins, and to lead holy Lives, and be not ſlothful in this important Buſineſs, but fervent in Spirit, in a vigorous Conflict with our ghoſtly Enemies, and in our conſtant, and ſteady Performance of this

Work

Work of the Lord, and of our own Souls; that we may be found among the ſelect Company, that are called, and choſen, and faithful, who ſhall overcome by the Blood of the Lamb, and to whom belongeth the Rewards of eternal Life. I leave with you that ſerious Advice of the Lord Jeſus to his Diſciples, Luk. xxi. 36. *Watch ye therefore, and pray, always, that ye may be accounted worthy to eſcape all theſe Things that ſhall come to paſs, and to ſtand before the Son of Man.*

The Saint instructed, comforted, and counselled.

SERMON XXI.

ACTS XVI. 30.

And said, Sirs, What must I do to be saved?

THrough the merciful Help of God, I have, in Twenty several Discourses, gone through what I intended in the Doctrinal Handling of these Words, and under the general Doctrine, which was,

Doc. It is of the highest Concernment unto perishing Sinners to be very solicitous, what they must do to be saved,

Have, by Divine Assistance,

I. Shewed you, what it is to be saved;

II. Evidenced, that perishing Sinners may be [illegible]d;

III. Shewed

III. Shewed you, that periſhing Sinners muſt know, and practiſe, all that is neceſſary, in order to their Salvation; and

IV. Proved, that it is a Matter of the higheſt Concernment to them, and therefore they ought to be moſt ſeriouſly ſolicitous about it.

Having diſtinctly ſpoken to theſe ſeveral Heads, and made ſome brief Reflections, as we went along, upon the ſeveral Parts thereof, I ſhall now proceed, (by the ſame Divine Help) to the larger Improvement of the whole; (as I told you I ſhould, the laſt Time I diſcourſed to you upon theſe Words,) in which I ſhall endeavour to apply, the Truths that have been delivered, more cloſely to the Conſcience of every one, by a particular Addreſs both to the Saint, and to the Sinner; under one or other of which Characters, every individual Perſon, in this Aſſembly, and through out the whole World, is compriſed. I would to God, that ye were all the Lord's People, and that, not only in Profeſſion, but, in Sincerity, and in Truth; but, alaſs! it is to be feared that there are many among us, who have never yet given up their Hearts, with their Names, to God in Chriſt; who remain, even to this Day, under the Power of Sin, and Luſt, the World, and Devil; who are going on, in their Treſpaſſes, unconcerned about their eternal State; and who never yet, with any ſerioufneſs, and ſolicitude of Mind, have made that Enquiry, *what muſt we do to be ſaved?* Though this be too much the Character of Mankind, in General, yet, I cannot but hope, and am verily perſwaded, that there are ſome amongſt us, devout Men, and Women not a few, who have felt the mighty Power of the Word, and Spirit, upon their Hearts, and have thereby been enlightened, and convinced, and have had produced in them a very great Solicitude, and Concern about the Salvation of their Souls, and are ſanc-

ſified in Chriſt Jeſus, and are conſtantly purſuing the Death of Sin, and the Encreaſe of Grace, in their Souls, that they may, as the devoted Servants of God, enjoy his Favour, and be happy in his Preſence, in the heavenly World, through out eternal Ages. And therefore I ſhall now addreſs myſelf, more particularly, to each of theſe, that I may give to every one their Portion in due Seaſon.

The general IMPROVEMENT.

USE. I. Let me addreſs myſelf to the Saint, and apply theſe Goſpel Truths to the real *Chriſtian*, who hath believed our Report, embraced the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and unfeignedly repented of all his Sins; who has truly, and joyfully experienced the Divine Workmanſhip upon his Soul, in a thorow Converſion unto God; and conſequently, whoſe Salvation is already begun, and firmly ſecured to him, in the Covenant Promiſe of the unchangeable Jehovah. Unto ſuch an one I have a Word of Inſtruction, of Comfort, and of Counſel, to offer in the Name of Jeſus, and from his holy Oracles.

1. This Doctrine may ſerve to inſtruct the Saint, the real Chriſtian, what dear Obligations he is brought under to the lovely Jeſus, the great Saviour, to love, admire, and praiſe him forever. Thou, O Saint of God! knoweſt what Salvation meaneth; thou haſt been made ſenſible of the Worth, and Excellency of it, by thy View of the Want of it, and thy happy Experience of the bleſſed Fruits of it. Thou, O holy Soul! haſt been thorowly awakened unto a ſerious Solicitude, and earneſt Concern of Mind, about thy own Salvation. Thou haſt felt the Pangs of the New-Birth, and, by the Workmanſhip of the Divine Spirit upon thy Soul, and the Grace of God which is given to thee, by which thou art made a Saint,

thou

thou art turned out of the Paths of the Deſtroyer, and art walking in the Path Way of Life; the Priſon Doors have been opened to thee, thy Bonds have been looſed, and thy Fetters taken off from thee; the Prey has been taken from the Mighty, and the lawful Captive of Hell has been delivered, and thou haſt been plucked as a Brand out of the Burning; and now thou art entered upon the Poſſeſſion of the firſt Fruits of thy Salvation, and partakeſt of the bleſſed Earneſt, and Pledge, of it's final Perfection; thus thou art admitted to a *Piſgah* Sight of the Land of Promiſe, and all Heaven openeth before thee! For, Joh. iii. 36. *He that believeth on the Son hath everlaſting Life.* Thou haſt ſincerely accepted the offered Grace of the Goſpel; thou haſt heartily cloſed with Jeſus Chriſt, the only *Saviour*, upon Goſpel Terms, and believeſt in him with all thy Heart; thou art now made willing to part with all thy Sins, even the moſt dearly beloved of them, for Jeſus's Sake, and truly mourneſt that thou art no more effectually delivered from the Power of thy corrupt Luſts, and vain Affections, and art continually maintaining an holy Combate againſt the Fleſh, the World, and the Devil, ſtriving for a more compleat, and perfect Victory over them; and the fervent Thirſt of thy Soul is, that thou mighteſt perfect Holineſs, in the Fear of God, that thou mighteſt become more like unto God, and Chriſt, and be enabled to do the Will of God, whilſt thou art upon Earth, with that Exactneſs, Delight, and Conſtancy, as Angels do in Heaven. Thus Heaven is come down into thy Soul, and eternal Life beateth thick in every Part of thy renewed Mind; and thou haſt the good Hope, through Grace, of aſcending to the bleſſed Manſions of the upper World, which lie beyond Death, and the Grave, there to poſſeſs a State of perfect Purity, and Happineſs, and that forever; which

Hope is the Solace of thy Soul in the Houſe of thy Pilgrimage, and a Treaſure thou wouldeſt not part with for all this World.

1. And now, O thou Child of God, and Heir of Salvation! From whence is it that thou art made a Partaker of ſo great, and diſtinguiſhing, a Favour of God unto thee, as to have eternal Life begun in thee, whilſt thou art on this Side Heaven? Has thy own Purſe purchaſed it, or thine own Arm effected it? Whence is it that thou haſt derived thy New Nature, and thy bleſſed Hope? Does this ſpring from thy Corrupt Nature? Whence is it that thou art recovered from the Gates of Hell, and art admitted within the Gates of the *New Jeruſalem*? Whence is it that thou art delivered from the Power of Sin, and Satan, and the World, over thee, and art brought, at length, to live a Divine Life; to act reaſonably, and preſerve the Peace of thy own Mind; to act religiouſly, and enjoy ſweet Communion with the bleſſed God; to live vertuouſly, and become a Bleſſing to all about thee? Doth this Fruit grow in Nature's Garden? Whence is it that thou haſt altered thy Nature, and the Courſe of thy Life, and haſt turned thy Feet out of the dirty, and gloomy Way that leadeth to Hell, and art now bound for Heaven, the Land of Promiſe, and haſt the Glory, and the Joys, of that delightful Country, already in thine Eye, and Heart? Say now; Is all of this from thy Self? Is it from the Wiſdom of thine own Heart, and the might of thine own Hands, that thou haſt gotten thee theſe Riches? Or, are there any among the mere Sons of Men to whom thou art beholden for the happy Change that is wrought in thee, and the bleſſed State thou art brought into? No: no: When thou waſt in thy wretched forlorn Condition, under the Power of Sin, and a Sentence of Death, there was none, among all the Creatures of

of God, that could accompliſh Deliverance for thee; when thou waſt caſt out to the loathing of thy Perſon, polluted, and periſhing, in thy Blood, thou mighteſt have looked within thyſelf, and all Refuge would have failed thee, and have cried for Help to all the Creatures around thee, and there would have been none Eye to have pitied thee, nor any Arm to have ſuccoured thee, none would have cared for thy Soul; none could have been able to have reſcued thee from the Jaws of the devouring Pit, and to have brought thee into a State of Salvation. No: It is Jeſus Chriſt, the mighty, and the only Saviour, whoſe Compaſſions have been moved towards thee, and whoſe right Arm alone hath wrought Salvation for thee; He looked and there was none to help, therefore he made bare his Arm, he travelled in the greatneſs of his Strength, and came with Garment died in Blood, mighty to ſave; by his Incarnation and Death he has rendered thy Salvation attainable, ſubdued the fierce Enemies that lay in the Way, appeaſed Divine Juſtice which was incenſed againſt thee, and has begun the bleſſed Work in thy Soul, which ſhall be compleated in Glory, by his *Holy Spirit* which he hath given thee.

Though the firſt Riſe of all thy Happineſs is from the pure Love, and Good-Will, flowing, from the Breaſt of the eternal Father, to his poor rebel Subjects, ſeduced from their Allegiance to him, by the powerful Craft of the infernal Spirit, the abandoned Enemy to the Divine Government; for *he hath choſen us,---- and predeſtinated us to the Adoption of Children,---- according to the good Pleaſure of his Will:* Eph. i. 4, 5. yet the full Accompliſhment of all for thee reſulteth from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; the Love in his Heart, and the Strength of his Arm, hath done all for thee; to him thou art entirely beholden, for all that thou already art poſſeſſed of, and all that thou hopeſt

for. Behold! how he hath loved thee! Lo! How he hath loved thy Nature, (which probably beareth the neareſt Reſemblance to that *Vehiculum Chriſti*, that illuſtrious Form, in which the Son of God appeared among the Sons of the Morning, and afterwards to the *Patriarchs* of old;) ſo as, *from Everlaſting, from the Beginning, or ever the Earth was*, to *rejoice in the habitable Parts of the Earth*, and to have *his Delights with the Sons of Men*; Prov. viii. 23, 31. and in the Fulneſs of Time to take that Nature into an inſeperable Union with himſelf, and become *God manifeſt in Fleſh!* 1 Tim. iii. 16. Behold! How he hath loved thee perſonally, called thee by Name, and choſen thee out of the World, taken thee near unto himſelf, put his Mark upon thee, and will love thee to the End! For thy Sake, he left the Delights of his *Father*'s Court, and Boſom, deſcended from the pure Realms of ineffable Light, and Joy, laid aſide his Robes of State, and made a viſible Appearance in our mean lower World, tabernacling among Men, in the tattered, filthy Garments of Fleſh, that he might teach thee the Way of Life, by the Heavenlineſs of his Doctrine, and the Purity of his Example, and all to *win a Mortal's Love*; to allure thee to Vertue, and Glory, by the Cords of Love, and Bands of a Man. For thy Sake, he became a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Griefs, ſubmitted himſelf to a State of Meanneſs, and Poverty, endured Reproach, and the Contradiction of Sinners, *made himſelf of no Reputation, took upon him the Form of a Servant, humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Croſs.* Phil. ii. 7, 8. Lo! how they reviled him, as *a Glutton, and a Wine-Bibber, a Friend of Publicans, and Sinners, a Deceiver, and Impoſtor*, and as acting by Power derived from *Beelzebub the Prince of Devils!* Behold the Man! clad in mock Robes of State, led about a Pageant

in

In Deriſion, inſulted by the Rabble, ridiculed by the very Scum of the World, buffetted, ſcourged, ſpit upon, and covered with a Load of the vileſt Indignities! View him in his Agony, ſweating great Drops of Blood! Behold him in the laſt Hours of his Life, that diſmal Tragedy from which the Sun withdrew his Face! See him hanging, betwixt Earth and Heaven, upon a Croſs, between two notorious Malefactors; the Blood trickling from his nailed Hands, and Feet, and flowing, in a full Stream, from his pierced Side; and in this doleful Poſture, and with the moſt exquiſite Pains, groaning, and dying, for thee! for thee, who had no Beauty, or Excellency, in thee! for thee, who was in a State of Enmity againſt him! Rom. v. 8. *While we were yet Sinners Chriſt died for us!* Died, to purchaſe the Pardon of thy Sins, and procure for thee all that Grace, and Glory, which thou didſt ſtand in need of! and thus, Heb. v. 9. *Being made perfect*, or having finiſhed what he had undertaken on thy Behalf, *He became the Author of eternal Salvation unto all them that obey him.* So that thou art beholden entirely to Chriſt for thy Salvation, as the Effect of what he has done, and ſuffered for thee, Heb. ix. 26. *who has appeared once, in the End of the World, to put away Sin, by the Sacrifice of himſelf*; by the which offering, *he hath forever perfected them that are ſanctified.* Heb. x. 14.

See then, O holy Soul! the mighty Obligations thou art brought under to the dear Jeſus! All that thou art, and all that thou hopeſt for, as a *Chriſtian*, and a Saint, thou art indebted to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt for, who has merited all for thee, and beſtowed all upon thee. Are thy Sins forgiven to thee? Eph. iv. 32. *God, for Chriſt's ſake, hath forgiven thee.* Art thou delivered from the condemning Power of the Law? Gal. iii. 13. It is *Chriſt hath redeemed thee from the Curſe of the Law*,

Law, being made a Curſe for thee. Art thou purified to the Love of God, and Obedience to, the Truth? Heb. ix. 14. It is *the Blood of Chriſt that purgeth thy Conſcience from dead Works.* Art thou numbered among the Children of God? Gal. iv. 5. It is *Chriſt that hath redeemed thee, that thou mighteſt receive the Adoption of Sons.* And it is He, and He only, that hath merited the Grace of Acceptance for thee, that now the eternal *Father*, for the ſake of what he has done, and ſuffered, for thee, will receive thee to the promiſed Mercy of eternal Life, as though thou hadſt never offended him. Hence ſaid the *Apoſtle*, Eph. i. 6, 7. *He hath made us accepted in the Beloved; in whom we have Redemption, through his Blood, the forgiveneſs of Sins.*

And as Chriſt hath merited all for thee, ſo it is he that beſtoweth all upon thee. It is he, the dear Redeemer, that has firſt purchaſed the *Holy Spirit*, and then ſent him down into thy Heart, to dwell in thee, and to lead thee, and to work all thy Works in, and for, thee; without whom thou couldeſt neither believe, nor repent, neither receive Chriſt, nor enjoy any ſaving Benefit from him. Thus he told his Diſciples, when he was about to take his perſonal leave of them, Joh. xvi. 7. *It is expedient for you, that I go away; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but, if I depart, I will ſend him unto you.* It is he that hath ſent the *Holy Spirit* into your Heart, to be in you the Sanctifier, and Comforter, to cauſe all Grace, and Comfort, to abound towards you. Joh. i. 16. *Of his Fulneſs it is that you receive and Grace for Grace.* The Father, hath communicated all Grace to the Son, the Spirit being given to him without Meaſure, that through his Hands, as our great Mediator, all might flow down unto his People, anſwerable to their various Neceſſities; and therefore there is not the leaſt Spark of true

Grace

Grace in thy Soul, but what thou haſt received from Chriſt. (Compare, Pſal. lxviii. 18. with Eph. iv. 8.) *He aſcended up on high, and received Gifts for Men, that he might give Gifts to Men. As a Prince, and Saviour, he giveth Repentance, and Remiſſion of Sins*; and, by the Workmanſhip of his *Spirit* in thy Soul, it is, that the Grace of Faith is produced in thee, whereby thou realizeſt inviſible Things, layeſt hold on them, and receiveſt them as thy Portion, and Inheritance. It is he that helpeth thee to lean upon him, as thy Beloved, to caſt all thy Care upon him, and to commit thy Soul to him, as the Lord God of Truth, who hath redeemed thee, with an aſſured Hope, that he is both able, and willing, to keep, what thou haſt committed to him, againſt that Day. And having purchaſed Heaven for thee, at the Price of his own moſt precious Blood, he taketh thee by the Hand, to haſten thy lingering Steps, and to conduct thee in the Way thither, and finally to bring thee, as a Son, or Daughter, to eternal Glory.

2. Say now, O devout Soul! art thou not infinitely indebted to the dear Redeemer? Has he not layed thee under the moſt ſtrong, and powerful Obligations, to love, and priſe, to admire, and praiſe, and glorify him forever?

How oughteſt thou to love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in Sincerity, and Truth, and to value, and priſe him above the deareſt Enjoyments of this World, and be ready to part with any Thing, and every Thing, Eſtate, and Friends, and Name, and Life itſelf, for him, who has not thought it too much to lay down his Life for thee? Is there any Object, in the World, ſo amiable, and lovely, and ſo worthy of thy Love, as the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is, in himſelf? Whoſe Beauty ſhall attract thy Love, if not that of the Son of God, in Union to the moſt perfect Man, of the exacteſt Form, the ſweeteſt Temper, and Heir of all Things! View

him

him in his increated Excellencies, as the only begotten Son of God, and ſee how the Perfections of the Deity ſhine forth in him, in their full Luſtre. View him as our *Immanuel*, God manifeſt in Fleſh, and behold the *Fullneſs of the God-head dwelling in him*; Col. ii. 9. *fairer than the Children of Men, and anointed with the Oyl of Gladneſs above his Fellows*, Pſal. xlv. 2, 7. and ſay of this Jeſus, *he is the chiefeſt among Ten Thouſands, and altogether lovely*. And is he not moſt worthy of thy higheſt Love and Affection, for what he has done for thee? Great Acts of Kindneſs demand proportional Returns of Love, and Gratitude. And has he not *loved thee*, and died for thee, *that he might waſh away thy Sins in his own Blood?* Rev. i. 5. Oh! let this Love of Chriſt conſtrain thee to love him, to give him the beſt Room in thy Heart, and to determine with thyſelf to know, and love, and priſe, nothing ſo much as Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucifiſed. Couldeſt thou have acted up to the dignity of thy Nature, as a rational intelligent Being, if Chriſt, the *Second Adam*, had not appeared for thy Help, to recover thee from the Apoſtacy of the *firſt*, and derive a New Nature to thee? Or couldſt thou have poſſibly poſſeſſed thy own Mind, in any tollerable Peace, and Serenity, and have been calm, and eaſy, within, when thy Affairs, without thee, have been attended with many, and great, Difficulties, if he had not ſpoken Peace to thee, and ſaid, Joh. xiv. 27. *Peace I leave with you, my Peace give I unto you; not as the World giveth, give I unto you; let not your Heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid*: xv. 11. *Theſe Things have I ſpoken to you, that my Joy might remain in you, and that your Joy might be full*? Or couldeſt thou have looked, beyond this World, with a joyful Proſpect of an happy Deliverance from the exquiſite, and endleſs Torments, which ſhall unavoidably ſeize upon thoſe, who live irreligiouſly, and act unreaſonably;

reaſonably; or with any good Hope of having thy Nature perfected, and thy Happineſs compleated, in the better World, if Chriſt had not *delivered thee from the Wrath to come*; 1 Theſſ. 1. 10. and *conſecrated*, and opened, *a new, and living Way into the Holieſt, by his Blood*? Heb. x. 19, 20. Couldeſt thou have acted like a Man, and have lived like a *Chriſtian*, and have enjoyed the good Hope thereof, if it had not been for the moſt compaſſionate *Saviour*, to whom thou art beholden for all? How much then, O thou redeemed of the Lord! doeſt thou owe thyſelf, thy very ſelf, and all that thou haſt, unto the incarnate Son of God? How oughteſt thou to priſe, and value, and love him, with the moſt vehement Flame of Affection, ſuch as no Waters ſhall be able to quench, nor any Floods to drown? 1 Pet. ii. 7. *Unto you that believe, he is precious.* One Chriſt ſhould be of more Worth to thee, than all this World; becauſe he has done more for thee, than the whole World has done, or can do. How oughteſt thou, then, to be filled with admiring Thoughts of his wondrous Love to thee, to triumph in his Praiſe, to abound in Thankfulneſs to him, to delight in Fellowſhip with him, to value his Image whereſoever thou beholdeſt it, zealouſly to aſſert his Cauſe, ſtrenuouſly to defend his Intereſt, and to conſecrate thyſelf, thy wholeſelf, moſt entirely, with the moſt cordial voluntarineſs, with the greateſt Ardency of Affection, and with the moſt delightful Chearfulneſs, unto his Service forever; reſolving with thyſelf to do all that thou canſt to promote the Honour of his Name? Say then, with the admiring *Apoſtle*, Phil. iii. 7. 8. *What Things were gain to me, I counted Loſs, for Chriſt; yea, doubtleſs, I count all Things but Loſs, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus, my Lord.* But I may not dwell upon the delightful Meditation; I paſs therefore to ſay,

2. This

2. This Doctrine ſpeaks a Word of Comfort unto the true Chriſtian. Haſt thou, in good Earneſt, been ſeriouſly ſolicitous about the Salvation of thy own Soul? And, under the great Concern of thy Mind, what thou ſhouldeſt do to be ſaved, haſt thou betaken thyſelf to the only *Saviour*? And, by the Grace of God aſſiſting of thee, haſt thou laid hold upon the Salvation offered in the Goſpel? Doeſt thou not only aſſent unto the Truth of the Goſpel Revelation, but art thou ſatisfied with the Method which God, in his infinite Wiſdom, and Love, has fixed upon, to accompliſh thy Salvation, by the Incarnation, Obedience, and Death, of his dearly beloved Son? And, doeſt thou now heartily conſent, that this Jeſus ſhall be thy *Saviour*, in all his mediatorial Offices? And, in the Faith of what Chriſt has done, and ſuffered, for thee, doeſt thou commit thy precious and immortal Soul into his ſaving Hands, venturing thy everlaſting Concerns in his Keeping? Does the Faith of the Son of God purify thy Heart, and Life? Does it make thee careful to mortify thy Corruptions, and to lead a new, and an holy Life, in Obedience to all the known Commands of God? Does it put thee upon Endeavours to honour God, by worſhiping of him, and him only, in Spirit, and in Truth, in all the Ways of his Appointment, in publick, and in private? Art thou very careful to exemplify the Divine Love, flaming in thy Soul, by thy Love, and Beneficence, unto thy Fellow-Creatures, by doing all the good you can, to all about you, both to their Bodies, and to their Souls, carefully avoiding all that would be hurtful, and injurious, to their Perſons, Names, or Intereſt? In ſhort; do you abound in Works of Piety, and Mercy, in Righteouſneſs, and Charity, in Temperance, and Patience, in Meekneſs, and humbleneſs of Mind, in Chaſtity, and Sobriety? Then art thou one of them

them that ſhall be ſaved; the evident Tokens of Salvation are found upon thee; yea, thou art already ſaved; the great, and good Work is begun in thy Soul; and unto thee belongeth the Conſolations of God, which are not ſmall. Unto you I am ſent, with that reviving Meſſage, Iſa. xl. 1, 2. *Comfort ye, comfort ye, my People, ſaith your God; ſpeak ye comfortably unto them; cry unto them that ---- their Iniquity is pardoned.* And, for thy Comfort, remember,

1. That good Work which is begun in thee ſhall certainly be compleated. It is a Well of Water that ſhall never fail, but ſpring up unto everlaſting Life. For *he, who hath begun the good Work in thee, will perform it, unto the Day of Jeſus Chriſt*, Phil. i. 6. The Seeds of Divine Grace, ſown in thy Heart, are immortal, incorruptible, and, having ſprung up, and brought forth Fruits, will endure until they are perfectly ripened in Glory. The Divine Life, that is formed in thee, like the Author of it, abideth forever. No Floods of Temptation ſhall be able to extinguiſh it. No Storm, from the fiery Blaſts of the evil One, ſhall be able to overthrow it. Thy Foundation is ſure, and immoveable, the Rock of Ages, the Rock of everlaſting Strength. Though thou falleſt, yet thou ſhalt ariſe, and thy God ſhall be thy Light about thee. Thy very Luſts, which are ſo much a Burden to thee, ſhall not prove utterly too hard for thee; but thou ſhalt, anon, ſee thy Deſire on thoſe thine Enemies, and obtain a compleat Victory over them; yea, the Time is haſtening, when thou ſhalt ſee thoſe Egyptian Taskmaſters, which held thee under cruel Bondage, no more again forever. For *faithful is he that hath called you, who alſo will do it.* 1 Theſ. v. 24. The Perſeverance of the Saints is not only a comfortable Doctrine, but a very great Excitement unto all Holineſs, whatever may be ſuggeſted of it's Tendency

dency to indulge ſpiritual Sloth, and Diſſoluteneſs of Manners; and he that findeth himſelf emboldened to neglect his Duty, eſpecially Prayer, and Watchfulneſs, upon Pretence of his being a Convert, and there is no fear of his falling away, may very juſtly ſuſpect, that all his Hopes of a Work of Grace in him, have hitherto been but mere Preſumptions. For wherever there is a real Work of Grace, in any Soul, that Soul will but be the more quickened to Duty, and the Thoughts of his Perſeverance will ſtimulate him to greater Diligence, and Fidelity. What Soldiers fight ſo manfully, intrepidly, inceſſantly, and reſolutely, as thoſe that follow a victorious General, under whoſe Conduct they may be ſure of Succeſs? The *Apoſtle* well ſays, 2 Tim. iv. 18. *The Lord ſhall deliver me from every evil Work, and will preſerve me unto his heavenly Kingdom.* Theſe whom God will preſerve to his heavenly Kingdom, he will alſo deliver from every evil Work, that they ſhall not be too hard for them.

2. Thy Sins, and thine Iniquities, ſhall all be forgiven to thee. Though thy Tranſgreſſions have been many, and great, more in Number than the Sands and the Pile of them hath reached to the very Heavens, yet they ſhall all be waſhed away, in the Blood of the Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sin of the World; not one of them all ſhall ever be brought into Remembrance, and articled againſt thee, to condemn thee. So ſays the *Apoſtle*, Rom. viii. 33, 34. *Who ſhall lay any Thing unto the Charge of God's Elect? it is God that juſtifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Chriſt that died; yea, rather, is riſen again; who is even at the right Hand of God, and alſo maketh Interceſſion for us.* So that the Law itſelf, which thou haſt many a Time broken, ſhall not be able to condemn thee, for thou *art not under the Law, but under Grace.* Rom. vi. 14. *Satan* the great Adverſary,

verſary, and Accuſer of the Brethren, will in vain clamour againſt thee; he is a baſled Enemy, and *will be bruiſed under thy Feet.* Rom. xvi. 20. Thy own Conſcience, which has been Witneſs to all thy Crimes, ſhall be purged from dead Works, and *witneſs to thy Sincerity.* 2 Cor. i. 12. And the awful Juſtice of God, though accompanied with his ſtricteſt Holineſs, will aſſuredly acquit thee; and becauſe *he is juſt, therefore will he be the Juſtifier of him which believeth in Jeſus.* Rom. iii. 26. So that there is none in Heaven, Earth, or Hell, that will, or can, condemn thee; and that becauſe Chriſt, in whom thou believeſt, has died, riſen again from the Dead, and interceedeth for thee.

3. Fear not, then, O holy Soul, there ſhall no Evil befal thee. Thou art delivered from the Evil of Suffering, becauſe from the greater Evil of Sin, which is the procuring Cauſe of all Sufferings. Though thou muſt meet with Afflictions, whilſt thou art in this Vale of Tears, yet, theſe are not worthy the Name of Sufferings; and this is thy Comfort under them all, that they are all included in the the Covenant of thy God, and *Father*, who in great Wiſdom, and Love, appointeth them for thee, if need be, in Meaſure, not to hurt thee, but to do thee good in the latter End; and has ſaid, Rom. viii. 28. *All Things ſhall work together for good, to them that love God.* Art thou poor, and deſpiſed? yet, thou art rich in Faith, and Heir of a Kingdom. Art thou called to bear the Croſs, in Bereavments, Loſſes, Diſappointments? Why, they are but the common, and beaten Rode unto the Crown. And none of theſe Things ſhall be able to *ſeparate thee, from the Love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus, our Lord.* ℣. 39.

Yea; This is thy Comfort, that thou haſt nothing to fear in Death itſelf, which is diſarmed of it's Sting, and cannot hurt thee. Thou mayſt now look Death in the Face, with Calmneſs, and

an eaſy Countenance, and take a View of all the Terrors of it, gaſtly as they are, with an holy Compoſure of Mind; and though thou mayſt feel ſome Reluctance at the Thoughts of the Parting of Soul, and Body, two ſuch near, and intimate Friends, yet, mayſt thou take Comfort in this, that their Separation will be but for a while, and in order to a joyful, happy, and endleſs Meeting. For thy *Saviour*, by dying, *has conquered him that had the Power of Death, and delivered thee from the Bondage thou waſt ſubject to, through the Fear of Death:* Heb. ii. 14, 15. and has given thee full Aſſurance, Hoſ. xiii. 14. that he *will ranſom thee from the Power of the Grave*, and that *the laſt Enemy, which is Death, ſhall be deſtroyed.* 1 Cor. xv. 26. So that thou mayeſt now ſing the Song of Triumph, *v.* 55. *O Death, where is thy Sting! O Grave, where is thy Victory?*

4. As thou haſt no Evil to fear, ſo thou ſhalt not want any good Thing. Thy Redeemer is ſtrong, and mighty, the Lord of Hoſts is his Name, and he will aſſuredly perform that which ſhall be good for thee. With what Strength does the *Apoſtle* argue? Rom. viii. 32. *He that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not, with him, alſo, freely give us all Things?* What will a God of infinite Goodneſs withhold from them on whom he beſtows his well beloved Son?

Shalt thou want any temporal good Thing? No; thy heavenly *Father* knoweth what you ſtand in need of, and hath made all over unto thee, in his everlaſting, and well ordered Covenant; ſo that, *of Things preſent, all are yours*, 1 Cor. iii. 22. and ſhall certainly be conferred upon you, ſo far as they ſhall be good for you; and ſurely, thou canſt not, in Reaſon, deſire more: So that thou canſt ſay, Pſal. xxiii. 1. *The Lord is my Shepherd, I ſhall not want.* He will ſufficiently provide for thee, yea,

yea, beſtow an Abundance upon thee, if he ſeeth that to be beſt for thee. However, the leaſt Meaſure of earthly Enjoyments, which he may ſee Cauſe to alot unto thee, ſhall be made, truly, a Bleſſing to thee, anſwer to all the Ends of the preſent Life, and afford thee more Comfort, than the greateſt *Revenue of many Wicked.* Pſal. xxxvii. 16.

Art thou but a Brother of low Degree, in Grace? and doſt thou feel thy Wants, and Weakneſſes, and mourn becauſe of them, and earneſtly thirſteth after greater Meaſures of Grace? This is thy Comfort, that he, who dealeth forth, to every one, their Meaſure of Grace, ſeverally, as he ſeeth meet, will ſtrengthen, and encreaſe, thy Grace, ſo as to make it anſwerable unto thy Day, to the various Duties, and Trials, he appointeth for thee, and will cauſe all Grace, needful, to abound unto thee; for he hath ſaid, 2 Cor. xii. 9. *My Grace ſhall be ſufficient for thee.*

In a Word: thou ſhalt more certainly be brought to heavenly Glory, hereafter. The everlaſting Mercies of the heavenly World are thy Portion, which thy heavenly *Father* hath reſerved for thee, and thy *Saviour* is gone before to take Poſſeſſion of, on thy Behalf: and aſſured thee, Rev. iii. 21. *He that overcometh ſhall ſit down, with him, in his Throne, even as he overcame, and ſet down, with his Father, in his Throne.*

Oh! what abundant Conſolation, then, belongeth to thee, thou Child of God, and Heir of Salvation! and ſhouldeſt thou not, now, mightily encourage thyſelf, hereby, to go on ſinging in the Ways of the Lord, rejoicing in Hope of the Glory of God? But I paſs on to a third Head, viz.

3. This Doctrine, alſo, affordeth a Word of Counſel unto the ſerious Chriſtian. And it is, in ſhort, this; Know thyſelf, and live up to thy Character. Know thyſelf to be a *Man*, a rati-

onal, and underſtanding Agent, capable of ſeeing into the Reaſon of thy own Actions, and of giving an Account of them; and ſcorn to ſtoop to the Meanneſſes, that are below thy Nature, and bring thee upon the Level with the Brutes around thee; and ſuffer not thyſelf to be governed by low Appetites, and Paſſions, but by Reaſon, in all that thou doeſt. Know thyſelf to be but a frail, mortal, dying Man, who muſt, e're long, leave this World, and all the Enjoyments of it, and paſs into the World of Spirits, and appear before thy Judge, and render to him an impartial Account, of all that thou haſt done in the Body; and let the Thoughts hereof moderate thy bodily Appetites, and influence thy Conduct, that when thy Account cometh to be audited, thou mayeſt receive the Approbation of thy Maſter, and he may, then, ſay to thee, *well done good, and faithful Servant.* And know thyſelf to be a *Chriſtian*; one raiſed out of the Dregs of the Apoſtacy, who partakeſt of a new, and Divine Nature, being born of God, redeemed by the precious Blood of the Son of God, and inhabited by the *Spirit* of God, and under an Oath of Fealty, to do no wicked, and baſe Thing, to be true to thy God, and to obſerve all his holy Commandments; and be exceeding careful, not to allow thyſelf in any Thing, that ſhall be diſhonourable to thy Deſcent, and ſtur the Luſtre of thy Name. Abhor every mean, and dirty Thing, as unbecoming a Man, and much more unworthy thy Profeſſion, thy Relation, thy preſent Enjoyments, and thy vaſter Hopes. Remember,

1. Thou haſt been at the Pains of a Proceſs of Repentance. Thou haſt felt the Smart of the Wounds, which Sin has given to thy Soul; it has coſt thee many a Sigh, and Groan, and Tear, and thou haſt been in Diſtreſs, and Agony, of Soul, to get theſe Wounds healed, and to have the

the Breach, between God, and thy Soul, made up again. And wilt thou not, then, dread what has been ſo painful, and grievous, to thee? Wilt thou be ſo unwiſe, as to have any Thing to do, with that which thou haſt paid ſo dear for already? Wilt thou fooliſhly give new Wounds to thy Soul, and aggravate thy old Sores, and procure to thyſelf greater Smart than, it may be, thou haſt ever yet groaned under? Or is it nothing to thee, to provoke thy heavenly *Father*, thy beſt Friend, to turn away his Face from thee, and leave thee, full of Horror, to grope in the Dark, and lament thy forſaken Condition? Though thou canſt not fall from Grace, totally, and finally, yet, *be not high minded, but fear*, leſt, by thy Falls, thou ſhouldeſt procure to thyſelf ſuch broken Bones, as ſhall make thee to go halt, and mourning, all thy Days after.

2. Call to Mind thy peculiar Advantages. Thou art recovered to thy right Mind, art brought out of Darkneſs, into marvellous Light; thou haſt been priviledged with a Spirit of Diſcerning, and haſt ſeen more into the deep Things of God, than others, and knoweſt the Hope of his Calling, and the Riches of the Glory of his Inheritance in the Saints, and haſt the Divine *Paraclete* for thy Guide, and Comforter; Oh! then, ſee to it that you walk, not in Darkneſs, but as a Child of Light. Put on the whole Armour of Righteouſneſs, and make no Proviſion for the Fleſh, to fulfil the Luſts thereof, leſt Darkneſs overtake you, and you ſtumble, and fall. Walk in the Light, while you have the Light with you; and let all thy Actions be brought to the Light, *that thy Deeds may be made manifeſt, that they are wrought in God.* Joh. iii. 21.

3. Thou haſt put on Chriſt Jeſus, the Lord, in thy Profeſſion, and in thy ſerious Dedication of thyſelf unto him, to be his Servant; thou be-

lieveſt that he hath died for thy Offences, and riſen again for thy Juſtification; and wilt thou not, then, walk in him, and be a Follower of him? Wilt thou allow, and cheriſh, what Chriſt died to ſave thee from? *Is this thy Kindneſs to thy beſt Friend?* Wilt thou enter into a Conſpiracy, with thoſe that have been the Betrayers, and Murderers, of thy Lord? Or, can it be pleaſing to thee, to do any Thing that is offenſive, and affronting to him, on whom thy Faith, thy Love, thy Hope, thy all, is placed? Oh! that *having received Chriſt Jeſus, the Lord, you would be careful to walk in him*; Col. ii. 6, 7. walk in his Spirit, walk in his Strength, walk in his Steps; *rooted, and built up in him, and ſtabliſhed in the Faith, as ye have been taught.* Ye have eſcaped the Corruption that is in the World, through Luſt; Oh! be not again entangled therein, and defiled thereby, but keep yourſelves pure, and unſpotted, from the World; and let the Life of Chriſt be the Pattern, and Incentive, of your godly Converſation, and the Death of Chriſt, the crucifixion of Sin in you, that you may adorn the Doctrine of God your Saviour, in all Things.

4. And, O holy Soul, art thou not one bound for Heaven? Is not thy Hope, and thy Treaſure, and thy Heart there? Oh! then, ſeek not thy Reſt, and Satisfaction, in the Things of this World; but live above the World. Col. iii. 1. *Being riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe Things which are above, where Chriſt is, at the Right Hand of God.* Let your Eye be fixed upon unſeen eternal Things, your Mind intent, and your diligent Care, and Labour, employed upon them. Be patient under all Afflictions, content in every Condition; endure Hardneſs, as good Soldiers of Jeſus Chriſt; and be not weary in Well-doing, knowing you ſhall certainly reap, if ye faint not, and that none of the Sufferings of the preſent Time are worthy to be compared with the Glory that ſhall be revealed.

Suffer

Suffer not the Hopes, or Fears, of this World, to influence you to the doing of any Thing that is impious towards God, or unrighteous towards your Neighbour; but remember who, and what, thou art, whom thou deriveſt from, and what thou art born to; and let the lively Senſe of the Dignity of thy New Nature, and the Largeneſs of thy future Hopes, animate thee to a ſober, a righteous, and a godly Converſation; that, as the *Apoſtle* directs, Phil. ii. 15. *You may be blameleſs, and harmleſs, the Sons of God, without Rebuke, in the Midſt of a crooked, and perverſe Nation; among whom ye ſhine as Lights, in the World.*

Having thus, inſtructed, comforted, and counſelled, the real *Chriſtian*, I ſhould now proceed to addreſs the Sinner, but muſt leave it at preſent.

An Earneſt Addreſs to Sinners.

SERMON XXII.

ACTS XVI. 30.

And ſaid, Sirs, What muſt I do to be ſaved?

I Have, as God has enabled me, endeavoured to apply the Truths I have been diſcourſing on, from theſe Words, unto the real Chriſtian, by ſhewing him his peculiar Obligations to the dear Redeemer; by comforting him in the Houſe of his Pilgrimage with the Conſideration, that the good Work begun in him ſhall be compleated, his Sins ſhall all be forgiven, he has no Evil to fear, nor ſhall want any good Thing; and by counſelling of him to live like a Man, and as becometh a *Chriſtian.* And now I ſhall conclude this Subject.

USE. II. Secondly; by moſt earneſtly addreſſing myſelf to the Sinner, and ſeriouſly applying theſe Goſpel-Truths unto thoſe that are yet in their Sins, and have no Intereſt in the Salvation, I have been diſcourſing on. And, alaſs! that, it is ſadly to be feared,

feared, this is the lamentable Condition of, by far, the greateſt Part of them who call themſelves *Chriſtians! All Men have not Faith*; yea, Multitudes, in the profeſſing World, are deſtitute of true ſaving Faith, and never yet knew what an hearty ſincere Repentance meant; but, notwithſtanding all the Offers of the Goſpel that have been made to them, remain in the Gall of Bitterneſs, and in the Bonds of Iniquity, unto this very Day. Surely, it is no Treſpaſs upon the Rules of Charity, to ſay ſo, when there are ſo many Paſſages, in the ſacred Scriptures, to ſupport it, and we ſee it too ſadly confirmed, by the bad Lives of Profeſſors; their vicious, and immoral, their impure, profane, unrighteous, lewd, and debauched Lives, plainly declare, that they are, as yet, under the Power of Sin, and Luſt; and the Eaſe, and Quiet, of their own Minds, in their preſent Condition, ſhew that they are not very ſolicitous, *what they muſt do to be ſaved.* Unto ſuch, therefore, I have ſomething to offer, by Way of Lamentation over them, Awakening to them, accompanied with an earneſt Exhortation, and Perſwaſion, that they would, from this Time, be moſt ſeriouſly concerned about their own Salvation. May a gracious God mercifully accompany theſe Things with a divine Power upon the Hearts of Sinners!

1. What Cauſe is there for our grievous Lamentations, to ſee ſo many poor, periſhing, Sinners, ſo dreadfully unconcerned about their eternal Salvation! It is a moſt melancholy Thing, indeed, to think of, that where-ever we go, the greateſt Part of thoſe we converſe with, are a Company of poor deluded Creatures, whoſe Minds the God of this World hath ſo blinded, that, tho' they are in the moſt extream Danger of periſhing, and that immediately, yet, they ſee it not; whoſe Hearts are ſo hardened againſt themſelves, that, though they are pining, bleeding, dying, under the

the Gaſhes, and Wounds, of Sin, yet, they are wholly inſenſible of their Condition; and when they are faithfully told, and warned, of their Danger, are unwilling to make Uſe of any proper Remedies, to help themſelves; and often turn, and vent their Spleen againſt thoſe that would help them. Who, that had not loſt his Humanity, could go into a *Bethlem*, the Receptacle of miſerable Objects, and be unmoved at the Sight of Humane Nature, ſunk, and degraded, and turned into ſo many rueful Shapes, in the ſhocking Inſtances of the Frantick, and Mad, who ſpend their Time in picking of Straws, or the wild, and raveing, who roar, and ſing, and curſe, in the midſt of their Diſtractions; and Cutt, and Wound, and baſely defile themſelves, and throw any Thing that cometh in their Way, at thoſe that come near them? And, is it not enough to make our Hearts to bleed within us, to ſee thee, O Sinner, acting this fooliſh, and mad Part? How many are there of you, that, hitherto, have been unconcerned about their eternal State; who have ſpent all their Time, and Thought, upon the mean, low, trifling Concerns of the Body, which are not worth regarding, in compare with the greater Concerns of the Soul? How many are there, who, notwithſtanding the imminent Danger they are in, that one would wonder how they ſleep eaſy, yet, ſuch is the Luney upon them, they can ſpend their Days in Mirth and Jollitry, in Frolick, and Revelling, as if nothing ailed them, and they were in no Hazard of periſhing the next Moment? Oh! how lamentable is the Proſpect, to ſee many a poor Creature, like the *Demoniac*, *among the Tombs*, *crying*, *and cutting themſelves*; Mark v. 5. and ſo madly ſet upon their Luſts, and eager in their Purſuit after them, (and many Luſts which they can pretend neither Profit, Pleaſure, nor Honour, in the gratifying of them, but they ſerve only as an

Evidence

Evidence of the more exalted Degree of Madneſs, that is in them,) as if their chiefeſt Concern were to damn themſelves, and not to ſave their own Souls? Thus, they not only *drink in Iniquity, like Water*, but even *draw it with Cart Ropes*; they take Pains, and lay themſelves out, to the utmoſt of their Power, to be as profane, and irreligious, and ſhamefully immoral, as ever they can, as if they were reſolved to ſtorm Hell, and take it by Violence. What leſs doſt thou do, who art, almoſt, continually calling for Damnation upon thyſelf, and upon all about thee!

Oh! what a melancholy Thing is it, to ſee the poor Sinner ſo ſtripped of his Reaſon, and Underſtanding, as to put from him all the means of his Help and Safety, and turn his Back upon the Opportunities of his being converted and ſaved? To ſee him ſlight the Word, neglect the Ordinances, and deſpiſe the Miniſters, of God, which are the appointed Means of his Salvation? Truly, for this, our Hearts ake, and in the Anguiſh of our Minds, for thee, when we ſee thee, thus, ready to lay violent Hands upon thyſelf, upon thy precious Soul, we cry aloud to thee, Oh! *do thyſelf no Harm!* For this, alſo we mourn before our God, Day, and Night, and earneſtly cry to the God of all Grace, that he would recover thee to thy right Mind, that thou mayeſt, at length, act the Part of a reaſonable Creature, and ſeriouſly regard the Things of thy Peace, in this the Day thereof, e'er they are hidden from thine Eyes.

And, Oh! What Matter of Grief, and Lamentation is it, to ſee ſo great a Part of thoſe, who ſeem to be willing to do ſomething about their own Salvation, yet, at the ſame Time, ſo remiſs, and cold, and really ſo little ſolicitous, and in earneſt, about it? who do all they do, in their ſpiritual Concerns, in ſuch a careleſs, off-handed, and perfunctory Manner, as plainly manifeſteth, they

are

are not much concerned how Matters go with them, and they do not trouble themſelves whether they are ſaved, or no ? It may be, the Word preached has, ſometimes, met thee full in the Face ; it has ſhewed thee to thyſelf, in all thy odious, and loathſome Colours, which thy Luſts have deformed thee withal, and then, like *Fælix*, when *Paul* reaſoned of Righteouſneſs, Temperance, and Judgment to come, thou haſt *trembled* at the View of thy monſtrous Appearance, and the Thoughts of what will become of thee, at laſt, for all thy Unrighteouſneſs, and Ungodlineſs ; and yet, for all that, thou haſt had no farther Care excited in thee, than only, like the fooliſh Virgins, to make a Blaze, an outward Shew, and Profeſſion, of Religion, and, to this very Day, thou haſt not been in any thorow Solicitude of Mind, nor taken any real Pains, to obtain a ſupply of Oyl in thy Veſſel, Grace in thy Soul, that thou mayeſt be ſaved ; but haſt been eaſy, and contented, in thy preſent Condition, let Things go how they will with thee hereafter. What a *Laodicean* Spirit has ſeiſed a great Part of Profeſſors ? How vainly do they dream they are full, and have need of nothing, when they are wretched, and miſerable, and poor, and blind, and naked ? Nay, have not ſome been ſo hardy, as to take Pains to ſtrifle the Convictions of their Sin, and Danger ? Have they not deſignedly gone into the Hurry of the World, or to their merry Companions, to their Cups, and Muſick, that they might drink, and ſing, away the Care of their Souls ? And, alaſs ! by their often ſtifling Convictions which, if diligently improved, might have iſſued in their thorow Converſion, and eternal Salvation, they have provoked the *Holy Spirit* of God to depart from them, and give them up unto their own Hearts Luſts, and to a Damnation that ſlumbereth not.

This, indeed, is the great Reaſon, why ſo many periſh

periſh from under the Light of the Goſpel; not ſo much from a direct, poſitive, Unbelief, or becauſe they do not believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the *Saviour* of Sinners, or do not think that they themſelves ſtand in need of Salvation by him; or becauſe they peremptorily reſolve, that they will not obey, and ſerve God; there are but very few, among Sinners that periſh, that go this Length; but becauſe they will not be at the Pains to come to Chriſt that they may have Life, through him; they will not lay themſelves out, in the diligent Uſe of thoſe Means, God has directed them to, in Order to obtain Salvation. There is Help provided for them, and that which is ſufficient, be they ever ſo weak, and infirm, in themſelves; *there is Balm in Gilead, and a Phyſician there*; but they will not go to the Phyſician, nor be at the Trouble to obſerve his Preſcriptions, and ſo they dye, and periſh, with the Remedy in their Hands, becauſe they would not be at the Pains to apply it.

And, truly, we tremble for thee, to think what a Maze thou will be plunged into, when the midnight Cry is heard, and thou beginneſt, with Anguiſh of Soul, to ſay, *Lord, Lord, open to us*, but ſadly findeſt the Doors of Mercy, and Heaven, forever ſhut upon thee. Luk. xiii. 25. This, it is to be feared, is the dreadful Deluſion of a very great Part of Profeſſors, that they ſatisfy themſelves with attending, in a careleſs Manner, upon a Round of external Duties, they are, it may be, beneficent, and kind, to their Neighbours, and do no Injury to any Man, (and it is well if they get ſo far,) and yet, after all, they periſh forever, for want of a due Care, and Solicitude, of Mind, to obtain the *one Thing needful*, an inward Principle of divine Grace, derived from Chriſt, the great Head of all ſpiritual Influences, to direct, and govern them, in all that they do. Thus, Folly, and

Madneſs,

Madneſs, are in thy Heart, O Sinner, *while thou liveſt*, and what Cauſe is there for Lamentation, and Mourning, that *after that* you *go down to the Dead.* Eccl. ix. 3.

2. I have ſomething to offer to thee, O Sinner, whoever thou art, for thy Awakening, and Conviction. You have heard what Salvation is, the Poſſibility of it, and the Way leading to it ; and now, what will thy Condition be, if thou art not among the Number of them that ſhall be ſaved ? Art thou not a vile guilty Sinner ? Has not the God that made thee, that gave Life, and Being, to thee, a Right to thy Service? Is it not a due Debt, which thou oweſt unto the God of thy Life, to love him, to obey his Laws, and ſubmit to his Will ? And yet, haſt thou not hitherto been moſt vilely ungrateful to thy Maker, and Benefactor, and refuſed to own, worſhip, and obey him ? Has not thy whole Life been a Contempt of his Authority, and a denying of the God that is above ? And if thou goeſt on in thy Rebellions againſt God, will there be any Poſſibility of thy eſcaping the Damnation of Hell ? It is as true as Goſpel, Mark xvi. 16. *He that believeth not ſhall be damned.* Whilſt, therefore, thou continueſt in thy Sins, thou art aſſuredly bound to a State the moſt directly contrary to Salvation that can be. As Salvation conſiſteth in a Deliverance from all Evil, both Moral, and Penal, ſo Damnation will conſiſt in the inheriting of thoſe Evils, in the utmoſt Fulneſs thereof. Thy Soul will become more like a Devil, in the Depravity of it's Temper, the Perverſeneſs of it's Appetites, and the Fierceneſs of its Rage againſt God, and all Goodneſs, and this alone will render all Places an Hell unto thee, from thy own Wickedneſs. And canſt thou bear the Thought of becoming a very Devil ?

The mighty Load of thy unpardoned Guilt will ſink thy Soul down into moſt amazing Torments.

And

And canſt thou bear to ly down in a Lake, burning with Fire and Brimſtone? *But who*, Oh who! *knoweth the Power of Divine Anger! as is his Fear, ſo is his Wrath!* Pſal. xc. 11. Thou canſt not raiſe in thine own Mind ſuch dreadful Images of the Pains, and Torments of Hell, as the Wrath of an Almighty, provoked, God, will inflict upon thee, when thou ſhalt arrive there. And if there were no other Pains, and Torments, but thoſe of the uneaſy Reflections of thine own Mind, and the ſevere Reproaches it will ſting thee withal, they would be enough to render thee truly, and forever, miſerable. For how can he ceaſe to be miſerable, who is at the greateſt Enmity with himſelf?

But then, as Salvation conſiſteth, in the Poſſeſſion of all poſſible Good, ſo thy Damnation will include in it, a total Deprivation of every Thing that is delightful, and comfortable to thee. If thou goeſt down into Hell, at laſt, thou wilt then loſe all that thou eſteemedſt comfortable to thee, in this World; for thou canſt carry none of all thy carnal Delights, and ſenſual Enjoyments, with thee, out of this World; and thou wilt know none of the true Pleaſures of the World to come, but they will be forever hidden from thine Eyes. Thou wilt, then, be everlaſtingly baniſhed from Heaven, and Happineſs; and it would be impoſſible for thy polluted, vicious, Soul to enter into thoſe pure Regions of Light, and Joy. And Hell, itſelf, is not a Place of Enjoyments, but of Sufferings. So that there is nothing comfortable there, unleſs, to dwell with devouring Fire, and inhabit everlaſting Burnings, be ſo. And, in all, how can he enjoy the leaſt degree of Comfort, who ſhall be forever ſeparated from the bliſsful Preſence of God? For God will ſay to the Sinner, Matth. xxv. 41. *Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting Fire.* This will be thy miſerable Condition, O Sinner! Miſery compleat, and endleſs!

And

And will it be any Abatement of thy Miſery, that, in thy Life Time, thou hadſt thy good Things, or that, in Hell, thou meeteſt with thy old Companions in Sin? No verily; but it will render thy Condition ſo much the worſe: thy former Comforts, and thy old Companions, will but encreaſe thy tormenting Reflections.

Say now, art thou reſolved to go to Hell? Is a State of compleat Miſery, to be preferred to a State of perfect Happineſs in Heaven? Is Damnation more delightful to thee, than Salvation? Wilt thou then chooſe to walk in the Way that leadeth to Damnation? Haſt thou ever yet believed in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and repented of thy Sins? Nay art thou not ſtill going on in thy Sins, delighting in Wickedneſs, and purſuing after thy Luſts with Greedineſs? Doeſt thou not live in the plain, known, Violation of thy Duty, both to God, and Man? And will not *the Wrath of God come upon the Children of Diſobedience, for theſe Things*? Col. iii. 6.

Thou haſt heard, indeed, of Jeſus Chriſt, the *Saviour*; but haſt thou ever cloſed with him, upon Goſpel Terms, as thy *Saviour*, and put thyſelf under his Government, and ſubmitted to his Laws, and the Guidance of his Spirit? Nay, haſt thou not, hitherto, refuſed to come to Chriſt, that you might have Life? and ſaid concerning him, as they, Luk. xix. 14. *We will not have this Man to reign over us*?

But think, Oh, ſeriouſly think, with thyſelf; Whether will this thy Unbelief, and Impenitency, lead thee? What will be the Iſſue and Concluſion, of all thy Impiety, and Profaneneſs, to God, thy Unrighteouſneſs, and Falſhood, to Men, thy Intemperance, in thy Luſts, and Paſſions? Will not this thy Hardneſs, and the Impenitency of thy Heart, prove a treaſuring up unto thyſelf Wrath, againſt the Day of Wrath, and Revelation of the righteous Judg-

ments

ments of God ? And wilt thou, then, continue in this broad Road of Sin, which aſſuredly leads down to everlaſting Deſtruction ?

Poſſibly, you may be ready to flatter yourſelves, that God is ſo good, that he cannot inflict Miſery upon his Creatures, and that you have Nothing to fear from infinite Goodneſs. But know, O Sinner, that the Lord is as holy as he is good ; he is as juſt as he is merciful ; and though he is a common *Father* to all his Offspring, yet is he a God that taketh Vengeance upon his rebellious Subjects. Why elſe are Devils caſt out of his Favour, and ſhut up under his Wrath ? And ſhalt not thou feel the ſad Effects of his Anger, as well as Devils ? The Devils never ſinned to thy Heighth of Wickedneſs, they never (that we know of,) refuſed his offered Salvation, deſpiſed his Mercy, and contemned the Blood of his Son : but thou haſt made light of all his Grace, crucified the Son of God afreſh, and put him to open Shame. And thinkeſt thou, now, that he will not hold thee for an Enemy : Verily, he will do ſo ; and thou wilt find it a moſt terrible Thing to fall into the Hands of the living God ! And what wilt thou do, in the Day when God riſeth up to make Inquiſition for Iniquity ? Canſt thou reſiſt his Arm, and withſtand his Power ? Shall the Potſherds of the Earth contend with their Maker ? Wilt thou be a Match for omnipotent Power ? It may be, when the Terrors of Death ſurround thee, and thy guilty Soul is filled with Horror, at the Proſpect of appearing before thy impartial Judge, then thou wilt roar out, in the Anguiſh of thy Heart, as I have known ſome to do before thee, *Oh, Almighty God, there is no coping with thee !* However, when thou paſſeſt into the other World, thou wilt dreadfully experience, that there is no ſtanding before an omnipotent God, who, by a Word ſpeaking, can cruſh, and damn, thee to the loweſt Hell.

It is, now, poſſible, thro' divine Grace, for thee to eſcape the Damnation of Hell. I am commiſſioned, in the Name of Chriſt, to ſay to thee, Mark xvi. 16. *He that believeth ſhall be ſaved*; and, *He that confeſſeth, and forſaketh his Sins, ſhall have Mercy*. Prov. xxviii. 13. But if, after all, thou wilt go on in thy Sins, and will not be reclaimed, until, at laſt, thou tumbleſt down into Hell, what a terrible Aggravation of thy Miſery will it be to thee, to think, that you ſo long enjoyed a Day of Grace, and Patience, and there was, then, a Poſſibility of your obtaining Mercy, but you ſlighted and deſpiſed it all; that you not only rebelled againſt the Authority of your rightful Sovereign, but contemned all the Mercy and Grace of a moſt compaſſionate Saviour; that you might have eſcaped the doleful Place of Torment, but, Fool that you was, you raſhly choſe to ramble on, inconſiderately, and madly, in the Way that neceſſarily led thither; and now all Hope of Salvation is at an End forever?

Oh! that you would now ſuffer theſe Things to ſink deep into your Hearts, that they may ſerve to awaken thee out of thy Security, and convince thee of the Neceſſity of thy becoming ſeriouſly ſolicitous, *what you ſhall do to be ſaved*. And remember, it will be moſt unaccountable Folly, and Madneſs, in thee, O Sinner, when thou receiveſt any Conviction of thy Sin, and Danger, to betake thyſelf to the Buſineſs, and Hurry, of the World, or to thy merry Companions, and intoxicating Cups, and much more to commit the old Sin over again, which thy Conſcience is convinced of, and troubles thee for, in Hopes to pacify, and lull the Clamors of thy own Mind, and ſo get rid of the Burden of thy own Reproaches. For if thou wilt not ſuffer thy Conſcience, now faithfully to perform it's Office, to admoniſh thee for the Evil of thy Ways, to warn thee of thy Danger, and check thee in

thy ſinful Career, and excite thee to fear, and dread, and fly, from, the Wrath to come, and lay hold on the Hope ſet before thee, as the only ſafe Way to a well eſtabliſhed, and laſting, Peace in thy own Breaſt; know it for certain, it will roar moſt terribly hereafter, and everlaſtingly reproach thee, when there ſhall be no Poſſibility of thy eſcaping from under the ſevereſt Laſhes of ſo rigid, and impartial, an Executioner. For, *How ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great Salvation* ? Heb. ii. 3.

And therefore,

3. I do now moſt earneſtly exhort you, even every Sinner, here before the Lord, to be moſt ſeriouſly ſolicitous, *what you ſhall do to be ſaved.* I think, I have undeniably proved, that Salvation is your greateſt Concern, and that every one ought to be moſt ſeriouſly ſolicitous about it; and now, I beſeech you, my Brethren, and my Friends, that you would, from this Time, make the Salvation of your own Souls your great Concern. Oh! don't trifle with your Souls; do not live in a careleſs Uncernedneſs what becomes of them. In what Words ſhall I addreſs you, ſo as effectually to perſwade you, to engage with Serioufneſs, and purſue with Diligence, this great, this important, this neceſſary Duty. Two Things I will hint at, namely,

1. Remember, that thy Salvation is well worth thy utmoſt Labour, and Pains, to ſecure it. Our Bleſſed *Saviour*, hath told us, Luk. x. 42. *But one Thing is needful.* And what is that one neceſſary Thing, but this ? That thou mayeſt be ſaved: that thou makeſt ſure that thou haſt a true lively Faith in Jeſus Chriſt; that thou unfeignedly repenteſt of all thy Sins; that thou haſt the Grace of God in thy Soul, renewing, and ſanctifying, of thee, and that, under the Influence, and Operation, of that Grace within thee, thou doeſt ſincerely endeavour to ſerve the Lord, all the Days of thy Life, in Holineſs, and Righteouſneſs; that, in this

Way, thou mayeſt obtain the promiſed Mercy of God, even eternal Life, thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

It is not neceſſary that you enjoy an Abundance of this World, which you are ſo apt to be fond of, for even your preſent Life, neither the Continuance, nor the Comfort, of it, do not depend upon an Abundance of theſe Things. So ſaid our Lord, Luk. xii. 15. *A Man's Life conſiſteth not in the Abundance of the Things which he poſſeſſeth.* It is of no great Conſequence whether you are clothed in Purple, and fine Linnen, or with a Garment of Camel's Hair, girt about you with a Girdle of a Skin; whether you fare ſumptuouſly every Day, or feed upon Pulſe. Perſons may go without, what are called, the Delights of Senſe, and yet be comfortable here, and happy forever hereafter; and they may poſſeſs the greateſt fulneſs of thoſe Delights, and yet their preſent Life be uncomfortable, and their future State unſpeakably miſerable. The whole World will not compenſate the loſs of a Soul. This therefore is the one Thing needful, that thy Soul be ſaved, in the Day of the Lord Jeſus.

This is a Matter of ſuch Conſequence, that, one would think, no prudent Man would begrutch any Care, and Pains, to ſecure it. For what tho' it ſhould coſt thee a great deal of Labour, to reſiſt, and ſubdue, the corrupt Workings of thy own Heart, to withſtand the Temptations of the World, and Devil, and to lead an holy Life, in Conformity unto the Rules of the Goſpel? What tho' thou ſhouldeſt be expoſed to ſome, yea many, temporal, Inconveniencies, and Sufferings, for the ſake of Chriſt, and his holy Religion? What tho' thou ſhouldeſt loſe the Friendſhip, and Favour, of Men, becauſe you dare not break Friendſhip with God, by complying with their vicious Humours, or ſinful Manners? Will not thy eternal Salvation abundantly make amends for all? Are not the Joys of Heaven, pure, and endleſs, an Overballance for

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the Toyl, and Fatigue, the light, and momentary Sufferings, of the Way thither? Yea, verily; *the Sufferings of the preſent Time, are not worthy to be compared with the Glory that ſhall be revealed in us.* Rom. viii. 18.

2. Remember, Oh Remember, that the Time will come, when you will moſt earneſtly wiſh, and paſſionately deſire to be ſaved. If this be not thy great Care, whilſt thou art in this World; if thou ſhouldeſt now have little, or no, Thought about thy Salvation; if thou ſhouldeſt now neglect thy Soul, and be regardleſs what becomes of thee, in the other World; yet, when thou paſſeſt over into that other State, thou wilt be feelingly convinced of thy Want of Salvation, and be moſt earneſt in thy Deſires, and importunate in thy Cries, *Oh, what ſhall I do to be ſaved!* Thou wilt, then, ſadly ſee, that, of all Things, thou oughteſt to have been moſt ſeriouſly ſolicitous about getting to Heaven, and eſcaping the Damnation of Hell, whilſt thou hadſt the favourable Opportunity therefor. Tho' thy Deſires after Salvation are, now, but weak, and languid, yet, then, they will be moſt ſtrong, and fervent. Thou wilt, then, moſt paſſionately long, Oh! that I were ſaved from this Miſery, which my fooliſh Neglect has brought upon me! Oh! I would give a World, if I had it, for an Intereſt in Chriſt! Oh! for an Opportunity to make my Peace with God, and ſecure my eternal Welfare! And, with what Earneſtneſs wilt thou, then, cry to God, to have Mercy upon thee, and ſave thee from the Place of Torment! So you find the fooliſh Virgins, at the laſt, and great, Day, crying out, with bitter Anguiſh of Soul, Matth. xxv. 11. *Lord, Lord, open to us!* So you ſee *Dives*, in the deepeſt Diſtreſs, crying, Luk. xvi. 24. *Father Abraham, have Mercy on me; and ſend Lazarus, that he may dip the Tip of his Finger in Water, and cool my Tongue; for I am tormented in this Flame!* The

leaſt Degree of Mercy will, then, be welcome to thee, how much ſoever thou, now deſpiſeſt the greateſt. But, alaſs ! all thy Cries, and Tears, will be in vain, and to no Purpoſe.

Well then ; Let every Sinner be perſwaded, to ſet himſelf, in good Earneſt, about this great, and neceſſary Work, and heartily accept the Salvation which is now offered to him. If ever you eſcape Miſery, and obtain Mercy ; if ever you get ſafe to Heaven, and ſave your own Souls, you muſt be in Earneſt about it. So great a Matter is not to be accompliſhed by vain Wiſhes, and ineffectual Deſires. Therefore now apply thine Heart hereunto, and ſuffer no Difficulty to diſcourage thee herefrom.

But, I am ſenſible, there are two Objections, which Sinners are apt to make, againſt their being very ſolicitous about their own Salvation ; namely ; That they cannot ſave themſelves, they cannot convert, and change their own Hearts ; and that they have ſome Deſign to take Care of their Salvation, but hereafter will do as well as now ; and ſo they neglect to do any Thing about it, in the proper Seaſon of it. I ſhall, therefore, endeavour to obviate the Force of theſe Objections, by ſetting before you two neceſſary Directions. viz.

1. Do what you can about your own Salvation. Though it be true, that thou canſt not ſave thyſelf by any mere Strength, and Power of thine own ; and thoſe that would go about to perſwade thee, that all lieth within thine own Power, do but endanger thy leaning upon a bruiſed Reed, and a broken Staff, whether they mean ſo, or no ; yet, nevertheleſs, there is ſomething for thee to do, which thou canſt do, and muſt do, as ever you would hope to be ſaved. Chriſt therefore ſaid, Luk. xiii. 34. *Strive to enter in at the ſtraight Gate.* God does not require more of any Man than he is able to perform. What he requireth more than

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thou haſt Strength for, he ſtandeth ready graciouſly to afford his Aſſiſtances to thee, to enable thee to perform it. But he requireth it of thee, to do thy own Part, what thou canſt do, about thy own Salvation. Surely, nothing can be more reaſonable than, that thou ſhouldeſt do what thou canſt, in ſo important an Affair, and that thou ſhouldeſt look to, and rely upon, God to perform what thou art not ſufficient for of thyſelf. And, unleſs you will do this, you may not reaſonably expect any ſpecial Aſſiſtances from him. Whereas, if you conſcientiouſly perform what you are able to do, you may, then, comfortably hope for the Divine Bleſſing to accompany your Labours, and make them effectual to your Converſion, and Salvation. Hence is that of the *Apoſtle*, Phil. ii. 12, 13. *Work out your own Salvation, with Fear, and Trembling; for it is God which worketh in you, both to will, and to do, of his good Pleaſure.* So that there is ſomething you can do, and this you muſt do. Particularly, let me ſay,

1. You muſt endeavour to acquaint yourſelf with what God requireth of you. The Word of God is the Mean, and Inſtrument, which God himſelf hath appointed for this End, to bring Men to the Faith of Jeſus Chriſt, and ſo to convert, and ſave them: therefore it is ſaid, Jam. i. 21. to be a *Word able to ſave*; and to *make wiſe unto Salvation.* 2 Tim. iii. 15. If God ſhould ſend an Angel, from Heaven, to you, he could not more fully, and plainly, tell you your Duty, and Intereſt, than they are already told you, in the Word of God; nor would one, coming from the Dead, be able to give you greater Confirmation, than what is already given, of the Certainty of the ſacred Scriptures being a Revelation from God, and of the infallible Truth of that Revelation. If therefore, O Sinner! thou wouldeſt make ſure of thy Salvation, thou muſt attend upon the Means thereof, and that

with Diligence, and Serioufneſs. And this thou canſt do. Thou canſt read, or hear, the Word of God, with the ſame Eaſe, and Attention, that thou canſt any other Book, or Writing. To this End, therefore, you muſt be frequent in reading the ſacred Scriptures, which are the Power, and the Wiſdom, of God unto them that believe, and carefully weigh, and conſider, what you read, not to ſatisfy a vain Curioſity, or to furniſh you with Matter for Diſcourſe, as it may be ſome do, but to inform, and direct, your Conſcience, and Influence your Practice, that you may know your Duty, and be ready upon every Occaſion, to attend upon it. So muſt you *ſearch the Scriptures, for in them ye may have eternal Life.* To this End you muſt alſo carefully attend upon the Word preached, and not turn your Back upon it, as the Manner of ſome is. For God has appointed an Order of Men for this very End and Purpoſe, to explain, and apply, his Word unto the Hearts, and Conſciences, of Sinners, that they may be awakened, convinced, and converted, and ſaved; and ſo, by, what is eſteemed by many, *the Fooliſhneſs of Preaching, it pleaſes God to ſave them that believe,* 1 Cor. i. 21. It is not, indeed, in the Power, or Holineſs, of Miniſters, that the Word they preach becometh effectual to the Converſion, and Salvation, of any Man, but only by the Bleſſing of God upon their Miniſtry; a *Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but it is God only that giveth the Increaſe,* 1 Cor. iii. 6. But ſince the Miniſtry of the Word is God's appointed Way, to bring Home a poor wandering, loſt, Sinner to himſelf, therefore you muſt be careful not to neglect theſe Means of Grace, by abſenting your ſelves from the Miniſtration of the Word, for every little Buſineſs, and trifling Occaſion, but you muſt make Conſcience diligently to improve the Opportunities of waiting at the Poſts of Wiſdom's Gates, and hear that

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your Souls may live. And while you are hearing, give Attention unto the Things that are ſpoken unto you, in the Name of the Lord, and loſe not the Advantage, by allowing your ſelves in ſleeping, or your Minds in wandring, but ſtir up your ſelves, and give the more earneſt Heed to the Things which you hear, and treaſure them up in your Hearts, for your Direction in Life, that your Steps may be ordered in the Word of God. And be ſure to cheriſh the Convictions you receive from the Word of God, of Sins to be avoided, and Duties to be performed, and never allow your ſelves to act contrary to the Light of your own Minds. Thus come to the Word of God, both read, and heard, with an open, honeſt Heart, that it may become a Savour of Life unto Life unto your Souls.

2. You muſt be frequent, and ſerious, in the Conſideration of thoſe Things which may be helpful to quicken you to your Duty. This the Sinner can do, and this he muſt do. He can think; for the God that formed the Spirit of Man within, has made thee a rational Creature, capable of Thought, and Reflection; and you find that you can think upon your worldly Buſineſs, and view in your Minds what would be hurtful to it, and what would help to promote it. And can you not as well think upon your ſpiritual Concerns? What you have to do in them? what would further, or what would hinder them? And you muſt think, as you would hope to be ſaved; for you cannot imagine ſo vain a Thing as that God will ſave you without the Uſe of your own Reaſon, and Underſtanding. The Want of ſerious Conſideration is one of the greateſt Reaſons, why ſo many Sinners, under the Light of the Goſpel, go on contentedly in their evil Ways, and refuſe to be reclaimed; ſo ſaid God of his ancient People, Iſai. i. 3. *Iſrael doth not know, my People doth not conſider*, and therefore articles againſt them, *Ah! ſinful Nation, a Peo-*

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ple laden with Iniquities &c. This is what God requires of you, that you ſeriouſly bethink your ſelves, that you thorowly weigh Things in your own Mind, that you may be able to diſcern the Beauty, and Excellency, the Reality, and Importance, of ſerious Religion: Hag. i. 7. *Thus ſaith the Lord, conſider your Ways.* And this Method God has been wont to follow with his Bleſſing, for the Converſion of Sinners. So it was with the *Prodigal*, Luk. xv. 17. when *he came to himſelf*, to the proper Uſe, and Exerciſe, of his Reaſon; and *David* tells us, Pſal. cxix. 59. *I thought on my Ways, and turned my Feet unto thy Teſtimonies.*

Well then, let every Sinner be perſuaded to think, and weigh things in his own Mind; don't begrutch a little Portion of Time to think on the great Concerns of thy own Soul; but go alone, retire from Company, and worldly Buſineſs, and think ſeriouſly with thyſelf, what is thy preſent Condition? Whither art thou bound? What haſt thou been doing all thy Life long? What art thou now doing for God, and thy own Soul? How do Matters ſtand between God, and thy Soul? Is thy Peace made with God? Think, O think with thy ſelf, if thou ſhouldeſt die before to Morrow, (and thou doſt not know what a Day may bring forth,) what will become of thy immortal Soul forever?

Think, my Friend, think what an awful, and critical, Judgment will unavoidably follow upon thy Departure out of this World: for *it is appointed unto Man once to dye, and after that the Judgment.* Heb. ix. 27. How wilt thou be able to hold up thy Head before the tremendous Bar of thy impartial Judge, if thou art found out of Chriſt, and in thy Sins?

And think of that long, and endleſs, Eternity thou art haſtening into; an Eternity of Weal, or Woe, of the moſt compleat Happineſs, or perfect Miſery, thou art capable of.

Why,

Why, O Sinner, art thou ſo averſe to ſerious Conſideration! Is it becauſe thou canſt not bear the Thoughts of thy Guilt, and appearing before thy impartial Judge? Why ſurely, it is better for thee to bear the Thoughts, thereof, now, and timely prevent the ill Conſequence, than forever to bear the Puniſhment of thy Folly, hereafter, in neglecting it, and to have thy Thoughts a perpetual Torment to thee, without a Poſſibility of eſcaping out of thy miſerable Condition.

Would Sinners be perſuaded to accuſtom themſelves to ſuch Thoughts as theſe, though but for one half Quarter of an Hour in a Day, they would probably, have an happy Influence upon them, to bring them unto Repentance, and Salvation. Hearken then to the Wiſh of God, Deut. xxxii. 29. *Oh! that they were wiſe, that they did underſtand this, that they would conſider their latter End.*

3. Come to a Reſolution to part with all that would hinder thy Salvation, and to perform every Thing that would forward it. He that has a great, and neceſſary Buſineſs upon his Hands, muſt rid himſelf of all that would be an Impediment to him, and improve every Thing that would help to facilitate his Work. This is thy Caſe, O Sinner; thou haſt the very important, and neceſſary, Work, of ſecuring thy own Salvation, to Mind; and there is no Sinner but what may come to a fixed Reſolution carefully to attend it, and to avoid what would hinder, and do what would further him, in this great Buſineſs; as is evident, in that he would reſolve, and practiſe accordingly, to abandon any of thoſe ſinful Courſes he has been addicted to, (ſuppoſe Swearing, or Drunkenneſs,) and to perform known Duties, (ſuppoſe Prayer, Reading, Hearing, &c.) if thereby he might gain a great Treaſure in this World. And wilt thou not do as much for thy Soul, as thou wouldeſt for thy Body, and to obtain the immenſe, and endleſs, Treaſures of Heaven, as to get the fading Treaſures of Earth!

Come

Come then, O Sinner, come to a ſerious Reſolution with thyſelf, to part with any Thing, and every Thing, which, upon a diligent Search, thou findeſt to be an Hindrance to thy Salvation ; reſolve to part with the moſt delightful, and fondeſt, of thy Luſts, though it ſhould, heretofore, have been as dear to thee as a Right Hand, or a Right Eye : thy Luſts of Impiety, and Profaneneſs, thy Luſts of Intemperance, or Uncleanneſs, thy Luſts of Covetouſneſs, and Injuſtice, thy Luſts of raſh Anger, Malice, or Revenge, whatever it be that ſtandeth in the Way of thy Salvation, come to a fixed Reſolution to have nothing more to do with it. Say with penitent *Ephraim*, Hoſ. xiv. 8. *What have I any more to do with Idols* ? Come to a Reſolution to part with any of thy worldly Enjoyments, at the Call, and for the ſake, of Chriſt ; and let none of the Objects of Senſe be preferred to the only Saviour : ſay with them, Iſa. xxvi. 13. *Other Lords, beſides thee, have had Dominion over us, but by thee only will we make mention of thy Name.* Come to a Reſolution, as much as poſſibly you can, to forſake the fooliſh, and vain, and wicked, Company, that would entice, and draw you, into the Ways of Sin ; ſay with him, Pſal. vi. 8. *depart from me, all ye Workers of Iniquity.*

And take up fixed Reſolutions to perform every known Duty, and ſo to be found in the Way of the Bleſſing. Reſolve, from this Time forward, to make it thy conſtant Endeavour to live according to the Dictates of thy Conſcience, and to have a ſteady Regard to whatſoever the Lord thy God hath commanded thee, that you may walk in all his Ordinances, and Commandments, blameleſs. You do, or may eaſily know the Commandments ; and, if you would enter into Life, let it then be your conſtant Care to walk in the Path-way thereof, the Way of Peace, and Life : ſay with him, Pſal. cxix. 176. *I have gone aſtray, like a loſt Sheep,*

Sheep, ſeek thy Servant, for I do not forget thy Commandments. If once thou wouldeſt come to a fixed Reſolution in this Point, thou wouldeſt not be far from the Kingdom of God.

4. Earneſtly cry, and pray, to God, to ſave thee. The Lord is *a God that heareth Prayers, and therefore unto him ſhould all Fleſh come*, for all that Help they ſtand in need of. Though it be true, that no Sinner can ſave himſelf, yet, inaſmuch as God is able, and willing, to ſave thee, therefore ſhouldeſt thou be earneſt, and unwearied in thy ſincere Prayers to him to beſtow his Salvation upon thee. Prayer is of mighty Efficacy with God, to open the Eyes of the Blind, and to cleanſe the leprous Soul. Let no Man pretend, he cannot pray, he knoweth not how to pray. It is a vain Pretence, yea it is a falſe Plea. He that can ſpeak can pray. Pray that God would teach you to pray. This God expects, and requireth, at your Hands, ſaying, Amos v. 4. *Seek ye me, and ye ſhall live.* It is *the Generation of them that ſeek him, that receive a Bleſſing from the Lord, and Righteouſneſs from the God of their Salvation*; and he hath not left thee without Encouragement to hope, that he will ſave thee, if thou wilt but be earneſt, and diligent, in the Uſe of thy own Endeavours, and ſerious, and importunate, in asking this Mercy at his Hands: He hath told thee, Rom. x. 13. *Whoſoever ſhall call upon the Name of the Lord, ſhall be ſaved.*

Well then, O Sinner, retire into thy Cloſet, daily, and there pour out thy Soul unto God, in fervent Prayer, that he would work his own Work in thee; that he would effectually convince thee of thy Sin, and Miſery, without which Conviction thou wilt never be in Earneſt to be ſaved. Earneſtly pray to God, to ſtrengthen your Reſolutions, and Endeavours, for a Life of Faith, and Obedience, without which divine Aſſiſtance, they will all be but languid, and faint, and come to nothing.

Earneſtly

Earneſtly pray to God, to diſcover to you the Worth, and Excellency, the Fulneſs, and Sufficiency, the Compaſſion, and Tender-heartedneſs, of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; how ready he is to receive thee among his Diſciples, and to bear with thy Weakneſſes, and overlook thy Infirmities, and how every Way able he is to ſave thee, even to the uttermoſt; that in him, you may diſcern a Remedy for all the Diſeaſes of your Soul, and may not be left to lie down in Deſpair. And earneſtly pray to God, that, by the powerful Influences of his *Holy Spirit*, he would effectually draw you home to Chriſt, and enable you to come to him, and cloſe with him, that, through him, you may obtain eternal Life: for *no Man can come unto the Son, except the Father, which hath ſent him, draw him*, Joh. vi. 44.

Suffer not a Senſe of thy Sins to diſcourage thy Prayers; for though thou ſhouldeſt have been one of the moſt notorious, and flagitious Sinners, yet, if thou art not reſolved to hold on in thy evil Ways, but, ſincerely purpoſeſt to forſake them, and, in a Senſe of thy Need of divine Help, wilt come and throw thyſelf at the Feet of God, with thy earneſt Prayers, and plead his merciful Nature, and the Merits of his Son, he will not deny thee. Therefore God ſaid, by his Prophet, Jer. xxix. 12, 13. *Then ſhall ye call upon me, and ye ſhall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you; and ye ſhall ſeek me, and find me, when ye ſhall ſearch for me with all your Heart.* Come then to this Concluſion with yourſelf, I muſt certainly periſh, if God do not help me: I can but periſh, if he ſhould deny to help me; I therefore muſt, and will, try what ſovereign and rich Grace will do for me; I will earneſtly call upon the Name of the Lord; *O Lord, I beſeech thee to deliver my Soul!*

Thus be frequent, and in earneſt, in your Supplications to the God of all Grace, for the Beſtowment of the heavenly Gift upon you; and humbly

ſay,

ſay, before the Lord, with good *Jacob*, Gen. xxxii. 26. *I will not let thee go, except thou bleſs me.* And think not to obtain the Bleſſing, without asking, and ſtriving for it. Let the Senſe of the Danger thou art in of coming ſhort of it, make thee the more importunate, and unwearied. I will leave with you the Words of *Jonah*'s Mariners, Jon. i. 6. *What meaneſt thou, O Sleeper! Ariſe, and call upon thy God; if ſo be that God will think upon us, that we periſh not.*

Theſe Things thou canſt do; and do you but do what you can, and God will not be wanting to help you. And then,

2. What thou meaneſt to do, for thy own Salvation, do now. There is many a Sinner, who, at laſt, miſſeth of Salvation, purely by his delaying to improve the proper Seaſon, of obtaining Mercy, till it is over, and gone. He is ready to think, that it is but a reaſonable Thing, that he ſhould forſake his Sins, and lead a new Life, that he ſhould accept of Chriſt, according to the Offer of the Goſpel, that ſo he may be found of him, in Peace, at the great Day, and he purpoſes to do ſo, ſome Time, or other, before he dies; but, for the Preſent, he has this Buſineſs to mind, and that Luſt to gratify, and therefore he muſt put off the Concerns of his Salvation, to a more convenient Seaſon.

But know, O delaying Sinner, that thou acteſt the moſt fooliſh, and unreaſonable, Part that can be; and that not only of poſtponing a Buſineſs of the greateſt Conſequence, to that which is of little, or no Moment to thee; but, in Running the deſperate Hazard of thy never being ſaved at all. For, beſides, that the Objection againſt minding thy Salvation, and the eternal Concernments of thy Soul, will be as ſtrong, if not ſtronger, to Morrow, than it is to Day, becauſe Sin will have gotten the faſter Hold on thee, and thou wilt have

the

the more to repent of ; I ſay, beſides this, for ought all that thou knoweſt, thou mayeſt not have an other Opportunity to regard thy eternal Salvation in, if thou doſt not ſet thyſelf to improve the preſent now.

Now, through the Grace, and Patience, of a good God, thou haſt a fair Opportunity to ſecure thy everlaſting Happineſs ; Chriſt is now ſtanding at the Door of thy Soul, and loudly, and earneſtly knocking for Entrance ; He is now wooing, and entreating thee, with many very powerful Arguments, and Perſwaſions, to give a due Entertainment unto his Goſpel, to believe the Reports of it, and accept him for thy *Saviour*, to obey, and follow him, and live. What would the damned Spirits, in the infernal Priſon, give, were it in their Power, might they enjoy but one ſuch precious Opportunity, as you are now favoured withall !

But if you ſlight the Means, and deſpiſe the Day, of Grace, and neglect to improve the preſent Seaſon, wherein the Patience, and Long-ſuffering, of God, is waiting upon you, you do not know, but the holy God may be provoked to give you up to penal Obduration, to Blindneſs, and Hardneſs, of Heart, that ſeeing, you ſhall not ſee, neither ſhall you underſtand with your Heart, and convert, and be healed ; for he hath ſaid, Gen. vi. 3. *My Spirit ſhall not always ſtrive with Man.*

Or, however, for ought that you can tell, Death may come upon you ſpeedily, and ſuddenly, and put an utter End to all your Opportunities, e'er you are aware ; and then the Day, and Means, of Grace, will be at an End with you forever ; for *there is no Work, nor Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wiſdom, in the Grave, whither thou goeſt.* Eccl. ix. 10. Then though thou ſhouldeſt ſeek the Bleſſing, carefully, and with Tears, yet wouldeſt thou be utterly rejected, and find no Place for Repentance.

Oh !

Oh ! then, I beſeech you, my Friend, ſet thy ſelf hereunto in good Earneſt, now before it be too late ; now, be exceeding ſolicitous what you muſt do to be ſaved ; now, lay hold on the Salvation that is tendered unto you ; accept the Lord Jeſus, with all his pardoning Mercy ; plead the Merits of his Obedience, and Suffering, for the Forgiveneſs of your paſt Sins, the ſubduing of your Corruptions, the quickening of you in Grace, and Holineſs, that you may be enabled ſo to run as to obtain the incorruptible Crown : and do with your Might, what your Hands find to do, in this important Work, and that now, while you have a Price in your Hands therefor ; and be not ſuch Fools as to neglect it, until the Night come wherein no Man can Work.

And remember, that thy Soul, thy All, lies at Stake. And ſince the eternal Welfare of thy precious, and immortal, Soul, depends upon your wiſe Improvement of the valuable Opportunities, and bleſſed Means, which God, in his infinite Goodneſs, hath put into your Hands ; and you know not for how long, or ſhort, a while, theſe Advantages ſhall be continued to thee ; but may be ſure that thou now haſt a good one, therefore, now, ariſe thou, be up, and doing, the Lord be with thee.

I conclude all with that earneſt Addreſs of the Apoſtle *Paul*, 2 Cor. vi. 1, 2. *We, then, as Workers together with him, beſeech you alſo, that ye receive not the Grace of God in vain : for he ſaith, I have heard thee in a Time accepted, and in the Day of Salvation have I ſuccoured thee : behold, now is the accepted Time ; behold, now is the Day of Salvation.*

Thus, my Brethren, I have, through the Favour of God, in ſparing, and enabling, of me, ſet before you the great Doctrines of the Goſpel, and opened to you the true Way unto Life, and Happineſs ; and endeavoured to move you with the moſt cogent Reaſons, and preſſing Arguments, to ſecure your

own Salvation, by a Life of Faith, and Holineſs: and may God, of his infinite Goodneſs, ſo ſet theſe Things home upon our Hearts, and the Hearts of our Children, that I who have ſpoken them, and you who have heard them, (and they that ſhall read them,) may not fail of the Grace of God, but may happily meet together in the Redeemer's Kingdom above, and ſhout our inceſſant, and endleſs, Praiſes, to God, and the Lamb.

Now, unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to preſent you faultleſs, before the Preſence of his Glory, with exceeding Joy; to the only wiſe God, our Saviour, be Glory, and Majeſty, Dominion, and Power, both now, and ever. AMEN!

FINIS.

ERRATA.

PAGE 33. Line 9. after *him*, add *of*. p. 43. l. 14. after *by*, add, *the*. p. 52. l. 11, 12. r. *Interpolation*. p. 132. l. 20. r. *become*. l. 26. r. *loſt*. P. 162. l. 5. r. IV. p. 172. l. 17. before *The*, add 1. p. 185. l. 22. after *Manners*, add a *Period*. p. 187. l. 5. for *is*, r. *it*. l. 35. for *gratify*, r. *glorify*. p. 203. l. 17. for *was*, r. *were*. p. 110. l. 25. for *their*, r. *this*. p. 214. l. 7. from Bot. after *capacitateth*, add *him*. p. 216. l. 17. after *yet*, add *a*. p. 232. l. 11. for *is*, r. *are*. p. 233. l. 12. dele *and*. l. 14. for *that*, r. *and*. p. 237. l. 29. r. ii. *Cor*. p. 242. l. ult, for *of*, r. *off*. p. 260. in the Margin, r. *Non*. p. 261. l. 6. r. *vertuous*. p. 262. l. 7. r. *awake*. p. 190 *for* 290. p. 345. l. 31. r. *ſafe*. p. 347. l. 2. after *you*, add *may*. p. 348. l. 33. before *from* add 2. p. 361. l. 25. for *fay*, r. *ſay*. p. 370. l. 21, for *direct*, r. *divert*. p. 378. l. 36. for *feeing*, r. *ſeeing*. p. 384. l. 19. r. *give*. p. 387. l. 30. r. *is*. p. 408. l. 25. after *Sands*, add a *Comma*. p. 410. l. 26. after Behalf put a *Semicolon*. p. 418. l. 29. r. *Lunacy*. p. 421. l. 31. after *Duties* put a *Semicolon*.

There are ſome Miſtakes in pointing, which an intelligent Reader, will eaſily diſcern.

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